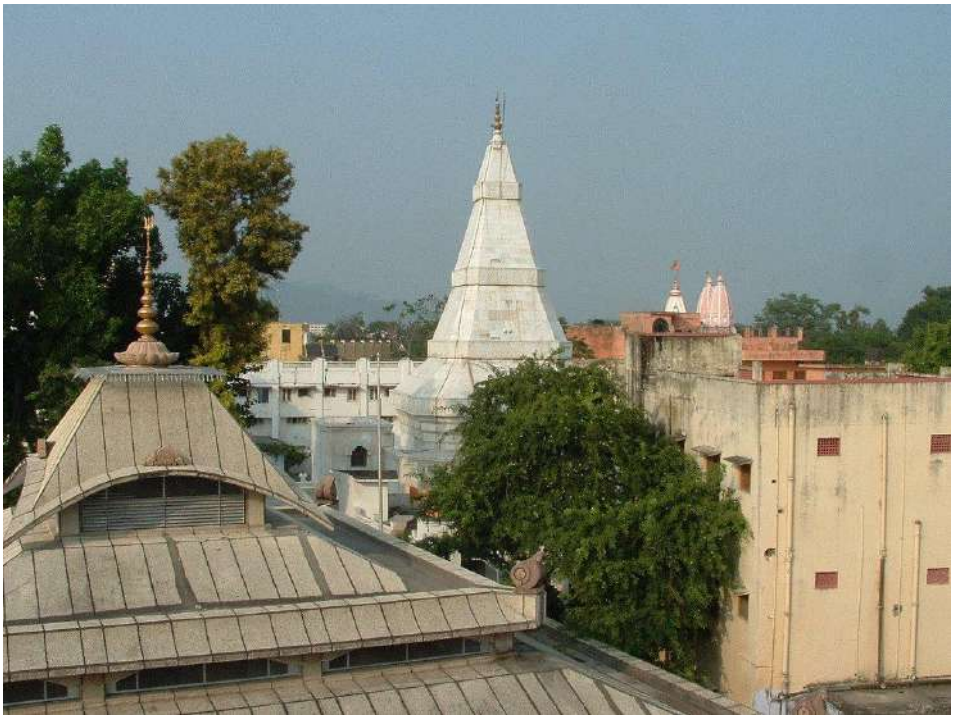
Dr. M. Thirumaleshwar

Sri Anandamayi Ma



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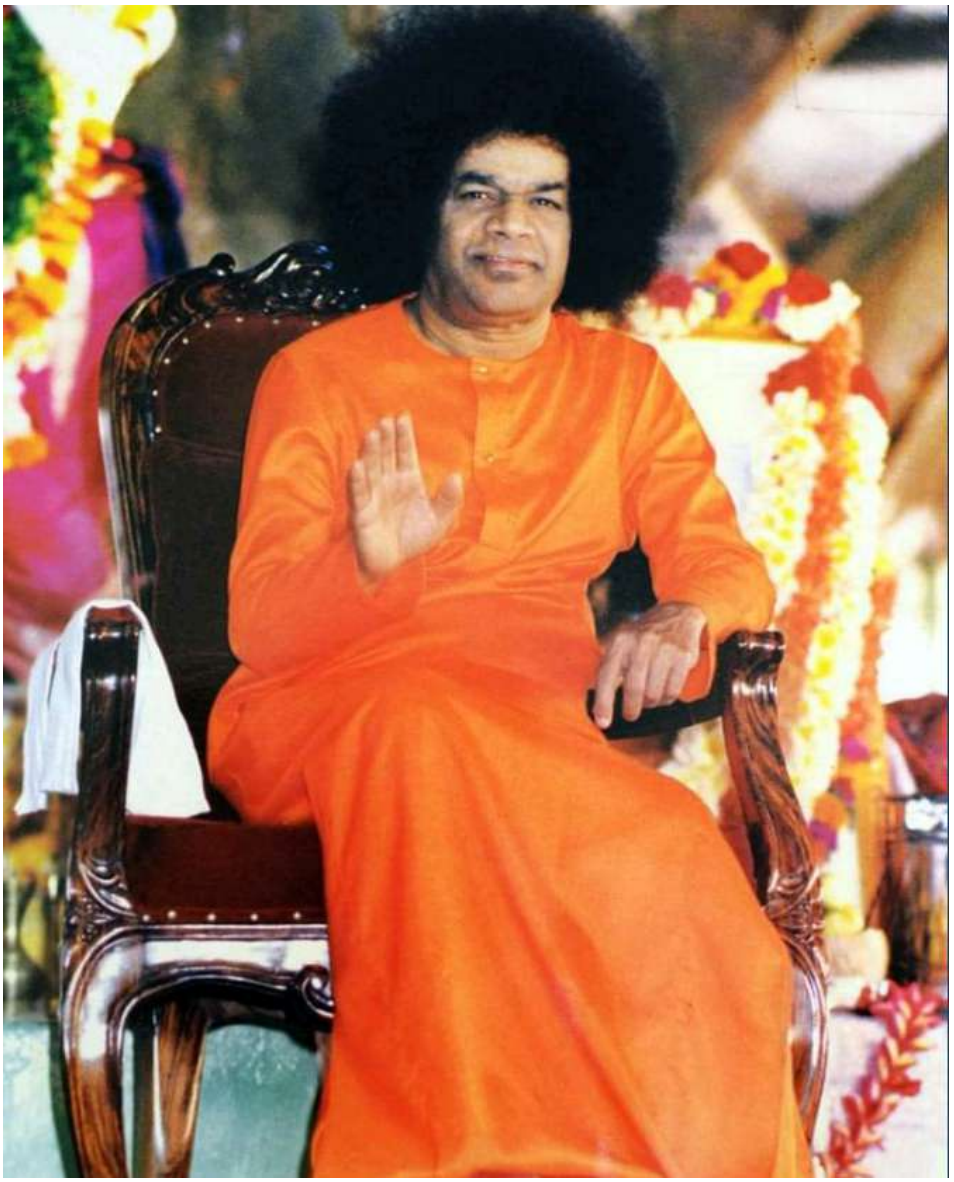
Dedication

This work is lovingly dedicated at the lotus feet of:

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba



There is only ONE caste -The Caste of Humanity

There is only ONE religion –The Religion of Love

There is only ONE language –The Language of the Heart

There is only ONE God –He is Omnipresent

.....Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

CONTENTS

Entries on this page are hyperlinks. So, one can quickly navigate to the desired place in the document by pressing on the relevant hyperlink.

Dedication **3**
CONTENTS 4
PREFACE 5
Ref: Wikipedia 6
Anandamayi Ma 6
Early life: 6
Dhaka 7
Dehradun 8
Death 8
Teachings and public image 8
Ref: anandamayi.org 10
Introduction to Sri Ma's life 10
Sri Ma's teachings 20
Contact info: 22
Ref: avatarsandyogis.com 22
Stories about Anandamayi Ma 22
Ref: hindu-blog.com 25
A collection of 108 Quotes of Sri Anandamayi Ma 25
Anandamayi Ma Quotes on Silence 29
Sayings of Ma Anandamayi – On the importance of laughter 30
Question and Answers with Sri Ma Anandamayi 30
Teachings On Spiritual Path – Anandamayi Ma 30
Ref: tripadvisor.in 31
Photos of Khankal Ashram, Hardwar 31
FaceBook page: Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee-Matri Satsang 39
Photos-about various activities in Kankhal Ashram, Haridwar 39
FB Videos-about activities in Kankhal Ashram, Navratri, Aarti at Samadhi, Gowshala Kumari Pooja, Ganga Aarti etc: 79
YouTubeVideos 81
Documentary about Ma's life, talks, bhajans in her voice, talks with English subtitles Questions answered answers, visit of Mrs. Indira Gandhi, compilation of cinema film clips, Pooja at Ma's samadhi etc 81

PREFACE

This free ebook is a compilation of information on **Sri Anandamayi Ma.**

Details about Sri Anandamayi Ma's early life, sadhana, marriage, celibate life, husband becoming Her disciple, Her teachings, talks, questions and answers, quotations, etc are given from pages 6 to 30.
Very good photos about Kankhal Aashram in Haridwar and their various activities are given from pages 31 to 78.
FB Videos links are given from page 79 to 80. These are about activities in Kankhal Aashram in Haridwar.
And, YouTube videos links are shown on page 81. These videos are about Documentary about Ma's life, talks, bhajans in her voice, talks with English subtitles, Questions answered answers, visit of Mrs. Indira Gandhi, compilation of cinema film clips, Pooja at Ma's samadhi etc

Acknowledgements:

Many of my friends and relatives have actively encouraged me in my attempt to compile this free ebook. I sincerely thank them for their support.

My wife Kala has always encouraged and supported me in all my literary works, sacrificing much of her time. I express my deep appreciation to her.

I have drawn heavily from many references, viz. Wikipedia, FaceBook pages, and associated YouTube videos etc.

Finally, I express my immense gratitude to Sri Sathya Sai Baba for His Grace and blessings, prompting me to initiate, continue and complete this work.

M. Thirumaleshwar,

May 30, 2022

Email: tmuliya@rediffmail.com

Ref: Wikipedia

Anandamayi Ma

Anandamayi Ma (née Nirmala Sundari; 30 April 1896 – 27 August 1982) was an Indian saint and yoga guru,[2] described by Sivananda Saraswati (of the Divine Life Society) as "la fleur la plus parfaite que le sol de l'Inde ait produite"[3] [the most perfect flower the Indian soil has produced].[4] Precognition, faith healing and miracles were attributed to her by her followers.[5] Paramahansa Yogananda translates the Sanskrit epithet Anandamayi as "Joy-permeated" in English. This name was given to her by her devotees in the 1920s to describe her perpetual state of divine joy.[6]

Early life:

Anandamayi was born Nirmala Sundari Devi on 30 April 1896 to the orthodox Vaishnavite Brahmin couple Bipinbihari Bhattacharya and Mokshada Sundari Devi in the village of Kheora, Tipperah District (now Brahmanbaria District), in present-day Bangladesh.[6][1] Her father, originally from Vidyakut in Tripura, was a Vaishnavite singer known for his intense devotion. Both parents were from well regarded lineages, though the family lived in poverty. Nirmala attended village schools of Sultanpur and Kheora for approximately 2–4 months.[7] Although her teachers were pleased with her ability, her mother worried about her daughter's mental development because of her constantly indifferent and happy demeanour. When her mother once fell seriously ill, relatives too remarked with puzzlement about the child remaining apparently unaffected.

In 1908 at the age of twelve years, 10 months, in keeping with the rural custom at the time, she was married to Ramani Mohan Chakrabarti of Bikrampur (now Munshiganj District) whom she would later rename Bholanath.[7][8] She spent five years after her marriage at her brother-in-law's home, attending to housework in a withdrawn meditative state much of the time. It was at Ashtagram that a devout neighbour, Harakumar, recognised and announced her spiritual eminence, developed a habit of addressing her as "Ma", and prostrated before her morning and evening in reverence.[9]

When Nirmala was about seventeen, she went to live with her husband who was working in the town of Ashtagram. In 1918, they moved to Bajitpur, where she stayed until 1924. It was a celibate marriage—whenever thoughts of lust occurred to Ramani, Nirmala's body would take on the qualities of death.[10]

On the full moon night of August 1922, at midnight, twenty-six-year-old Nirmala enacted her own spiritual initiation.[11] She explained that the ceremony and its rites were being revealed to her spontaneously as and when they were called for.[9] Although she was uneducated in the matter, the complex rites corresponded to those of traditional, ancient Hinduism, including the offerings of flowers, the mystical diagrams (yantra) and the fire ceremony (yajna). She later stated, "As the master (guru) I revealed the mantra; as the disciple. I accepted it and started to recite it."[12]

Dhaka

Anandamayi Ma on a 1987 Indian stamp

Nirmala moved to Shahbag with her husband in 1924, where he had been appointed as the caretaker of the gardens of the Nawab of Dhaka.[8] During this period Nirmala went into ecstasies at public kirtans.[7] Jyotiscandra Ray, known as "Bhaiji", was an early and close disciple. He was the first to suggest that Nirmala be called Anandamayi Ma, meaning "Joy Permeated Mother", or "Bliss Permeated Mother". He was chiefly responsible for the first ashram built for Anandamayi Ma in 1929 at Ramna, within the precinct of the Ramna Kali Mandir.[13] In 1926, she reinstated a formerly abandoned ancient Kali temple in the Siddheshwari area.[8] During the time in Shahbag, more and more people began to be drawn to what they saw to be a living embodiment of the divine.[14]

Dehradun

Anandamayi Ma Ashram, Haridwar (Kankhal)

From her shift Dehradun onwards various scholars were drawn to Anandamayi Ma's light, gift, power and message of love, though she continued to describe herself as "a little unlettered child". Prangopal Mukerjee[7] Mahamahopadhyay Gopinath Kaviraj, Sanskrit scholar, philosopher, and principal of Government Sanskrit College in Varanasi and Triguna Sen were among her followers.[8] Uday Shankar, the famous dance artist, was impressed by Anandamayi Ma's analysis of dance, which she used as a metaphor for the relationship between people and God.[8] She was a contemporary of the well known Hindu saints like Udiya Baba, Sri Aurobindo, Ramana Maharshi, Swami Ramdas, Neem Karoli Baba, and Paramahansa Yogananda.[6]

Death

Ma died on 27 August 1982 in Dehradun, and subsequently on 29 August 1982[1] a Samadhi (shrine) was built in the courtyard of her Kankhal ashram, situated in Haridwar in North India.[8][15]

Teachings and public image

Quotation

"As you love your own body, so regard everyone as equal to your own body. When the Supreme Experience supervenes, everyone's service is revealed as one's own service. Call it a bird, an insect, an animal or a man, call it by any name you please, one serves one's own Self in every one of them."..... *Ananda Varta Quarterly*

Anandamayi Ma never prepared discourses, wrote down, or revised what she had said. People had difficulty transcribing her often informal talks because of their conversational speed. Further, the Bengali manner of alliterative wordplay was often lost in translation. However, her personal attendant Gurupriya Devi, and a devotee, Brahmachari Kamal Bhattacharjee, made attempts to transcribe her speech before audio recording equipment became widely available in India.[9]

Quotation

"Who is it that loves and who that suffers? He alone stages a play with Himself; who exists save Him? The individual suffers because he perceives duality. It is duality which causes all sorrow and grief. Find the One everywhere and in everything and there will be an end to pain and suffering."[16]

A central theme of her teaching is "the supreme calling of every human being is to aspire to self realization. All other obligations are secondary" and "only actions that kindle man's divine nature are worthy of the name of actions". However, she did not advise everyone to become a renunciate. She would dismiss spiritual arguments and controversies by stating that "Everyone is right from his own standpoint,".[7] She did not give formal initiations and refused to be called a guru, as she maintained that "all paths are my paths" and "I have no particular path".[17]

She did not advocate the same spiritual methods for all: "How can one impose limitations on the infinite by declaring this is the only path—and, why should there be so many different religions and sects? Because through every one of them He gives Himself to Himself, so that each person may advance according to his inborn nature." She herself has said (ref. Mother Reveals Herself), all forms of sadhana, known and unknown, just occurred to her in the form of a lila (play) without any conscious effort on her part. Thus her Sadhana can not be slotted into a specific area, for to do so would mean that she was somehow limited to that area and her mastery was also limited. She welcomed and conversed with devotees of different paths and religions from Shaivaite, Vaishnavite, Tantric, or from Islam, Christianity, Judaism, Sikhism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism. Everyone was welcome and she was equally at ease while giving guidance to all practitioners of different faiths. Even now, the Muslim population of Kheora still refer to her as "our own Ma".[9]

She taught how to live a God-centered life in the world and provided the living inspiration to enable thousands to aspire to this most noble ideal.[7] She also advocated spiritual equality for women; for example, she opened up to women the sacred thread ritual, which had been performed by men only for centuries, but only those who met the moral and personal requirements. Her style of teaching included jokes, songs and instructions on everyday life along with long discourses, silent meditation and recommended reading of scriptures.

She frequently referred to herself in the third person as either "this body" or "this little girl", which is a common spiritual practice in Hinduism in order to detach oneself from Ego.[18] Paramhansa Yogananda wrote about her in his book Autobiography of a Yogi.[1][19] His meeting with her is recounted in the chapter titled "The Bengali 'Joy-Permeated Mother'", where she explains her background:

"Father, there is little to tell." She spread her graceful hands in a deprecatory gesture. "My consciousness has never associated itself with this temporary body. Before I came on this earth, Father, I was the same. As a little girl, I was the same. I grew into womanhood, but still I was the same. When the family in which I had been born made arrangements to have this body married, I was the same... And, Father, in front of you now, I am the same. Ever afterward, though the dance of creation change around me in the hall of eternity, I shall be the same.[20]"

The Publication Department of the Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha in Varanasi regularly publishes her teaching in the periodical Amrit Varta quarterly in English, Hindi, Gujarati and Bengali. The Sri Sri Anandamayi Sangha in Haridwar organizes the annual Samyam Mahavrata congregation to devote a week to collective meditation, religious discourse and devotional music.[7]

Ref: anandamayi.org

Introduction to Sri Ma's life:

Sri Ma Anandamayi today is widely recognized as a personality of great spiritual eminence. She was born in 1896 and she took samadhi at the age of 86 ; these limitations, however, cannot be said to have conditioned her utter freedom to be just herself under all circumstances. She was the embodiment of a joyous self-sufficiency, which enraptured the hearts of all who came near her.

The mysterious aloofness of her personality was totally beyond human understanding and yet it was so tempered by her compassionate love for all living creatures that she seemed closer than the most indulgent friend ever could be. She was the Teacher whose guidance was sought by the learned as well as the simple, the old and also children, people from alien cultures or from traditional backgrounds.

Although she travelled incessantly, it was seen that she was at home everywhere and no one was a stranger to her. Throughout the length and breadth of India and also beyond its shores people found her to be, as if the personification of their own inner vision of the Adored one who is most dear to their hearts.

In Dhaka where she first gained recognition, She was known as “Manush Kali”, that is, the ‘living Kali’. Kali is the presiding Deity of Bengal so that was quite understandable. When she moved out of Bengal and visited other provinces, her presence elicited the same type of response, even at her first appearance. On the shores of the Holy Narmada, she was greeted as “Devi Narmada”. In Madurai she was hailed as the Goddess Minakshi by surging crowds who waited hours for a glimpse of her. In the Punjab she was given the same place of honour as the Holy Granth Sahab. In Vrindavan, the much-respected Mahatma, Sri Haribabaji Maharaj saw in her his adored Deity, the Lord Gauranga. The Sindhi devotees of Sri Udiyababaji Maharaj paid her homage as the visible Form of their Deity Jhoolelal. One Muslim devotee used to a see a vision of her with a Taj on her head during his meditations. A Christian devotee remarked quite spontaneously “Now we have a Face to put on God”. The simple highland women of Almora would say to her, “Now that we have you with us, we do not need to visit the Temple”

One visitor, an Irish journalist, frankly asked her, “Am I right to believe that you are God?” Sri Ma answered, “There is nothing save He alone; everyone and everything is but a form of God. In your person also He has come here to give darshana”. He persisted, “Why are you in this world?” “In this world?” Sri Ma answered, “I am not anywhere. I am myself reposing within myself’. During the same conversation the Irishman said, “I am a Christian:’ Sri Ma answered, “So am I, a Christian, a Muslim, anything you like”.

In general Sri Ma’s inimitable smile disarmed all questions regarding her identity. She once answered a devotee’s query in these words: “What a childish question to ask; People have various visions of gods and goddesses (in me) according to their own predilections. What I was before, I am now, and shall be hereafter. I am also whatever you or anybody may think I am; why don’t you look at it this way: the yearnings (of seekers after Truth) have brought about this body. All of you have wanted it and so you have found it. That is all you need to know.”

Richard Lannoy, a devotee of many years standing has summarised Sri Ma’s ways of being with us in a very telling phrase: “Yet there is a strangeness, a particularity, an indefinable quality which comes so near the limits of the definably human as to make an adjective like

‘human’ quite inadequate when applied to Her case, and ‘divine’ paltry. It is widely accepted that She was, simply, unique. She was, throughout Her life, the acme of effortless perfection”.

Sri Ma Anandamayi was born in a small village called Kheora, in what is now Bangladesh, on April 30, 1896. She was born into a pious, prestigious but non-affluent brahmin household. Her given name was Nirmala Sundari Devi. It is translated as ‘Immaculate Beauty’ which seemed appropriate as the infant grew up to be a lovely child.

Little Nirmala, a blithe and happy child spent her childhood in agreeable village surroundings. She was a favourite with everyone – ready to fetch and carry and to render whatever service she was capable of to anyone who asked for it. The entire village, consisting mainly of Muslim families, extended to her a love and affection which has endured through the years. Even now the Muslim population of Kheora refer to her as “Our own Ma.”

Sri Ma’s father was a devout Vaishnava. He was well known for his beautiful rendering of devotional songs; his melodious voice never failed to touch the hearts of his audience. In fact he was sometimes compared to Ramprasad, the saintly bard of Bengal who it is believed had invoked the presence of Shakti by his inspired singing. Sri Ma’s mother was a gentle woman of upright nature totally dedicated to the welfare of her family. That she was not just like countless such others became evident as the years went by. Many will remember her as the ochre-robed Swami Muktananda Giri who accompanied Sri Ma on her travels.

Sri Ma with her parents, Bipinbihari Bhattacharya and Mokshada Sundari Devi.

Sri Ma with her husband, Ramani Mohan Chakrabarti of Vikramapura, whom she would later rename Bholanath.

Sri Ma was barely thirteen when she was married to Sri Ramani Mohan Chakravarty of Atpara. Their family had a tradition of Shakti-upasana. As a child-bride Sri Ma was received into the family of Ramani Mohan's eldest brother Sri Revati Mohan and his wife Pramoda Devi. She remained with them for nearly four years while Ramani Mohan was in Atpara and in Dhaka. From a carefree childhood in her parents' home she was catapulted into a demanding situation of considerable physical hard work in an atmosphere of restrictive discipline. She cooked, cleaned, fetched water, took care of the children and served her sister-in-law in every way possible. Hard work is the lot of village women not only in India but all over the world. What sets Sri Ma apart from all such girls placed in similar situations is the fact of her total adequacy and a little extra, as it were. She remained uniformly cheerful, good-humoured, and more than willing to shoulder other people's burdens. Nothing was a chore to her. Her serene and equable temper was never disrupted by thoughtlessness or unfair treatment at the hands of the elders.

Actually Sri Ma's untroubled happy disposition caused her new family some anxiety; it could only mean a simple mind. In her childhood also she had invoked this fear in her parents' thoughts – perhaps the little girl was just a little below par, not to be at all mischievous and naughty like other children? It took many years for Sri Ma's close companions to realize that she was ever established in her often repeated Vani: jo ho jaye: 'Whatever comes to pass, let it be'.

It took time for discerning people to understand that Sri Ma was obedient but not biddable or suggestible. Her boundless compassion overflowed in concern for whoever came within the orbit of her ministrations: family, neighbours, servants as well as animals and plants felt the magic touch of this innate interest in their welfare. She also had a very ready and impish sense of humour which always took note of the foibles of her companions and gave her and perhaps a friend, much quiet enjoyment but being without malice she never made fun of anyone. She always had the aura of perfectibility all around her but somehow it never overwhelmed her companions. On the contrary; by her gentle ways and ready smile she endeared herself to everyone who came in touch with her.

At the age of 18, Sri Ma by the mutual consent of both families came to Ashtagram to stay with her husband at his place of work. In later years Sri Ma used to refer to her husband by the name 'Bholanath' so we shall use this title for him in this account. At the time of her coming to Ashtagram her mother had told her that she should give the same respect and obedience to her husband as she had given to her father. It has been noted that throughout her life Sri Ma was very mindful of her mother's gentle behests. Bholanathji met with a friendly but deferential treatment, which was very endearing. The mantle of a responsible guardian in charge of a precious treasure descended on his shoulders as it were. It may be stated at once that he wore this mantle with circumspection and competence all his life, till his death in 1938.

Sri Ma always had the aura of perfectibility all around her but somehow it never overwhelmed her companions. On the contrary; by her gentle ways and ready smile she endeared herself to everyone who came in touch with her.

Much has been written regarding the purity and perfect celibacy of Sri Ma and Bholanathji's married life. These words are rather inadequate because it would be much better to say that such questions never arose where they were concerned. Bholanathji obviously bore the impact of a beautiful young wife who was ready to obey his slightest bidding with an exemplary calmness of spirit. Their neighbours and close friends do not report that he was not perfectly content as he was.

Bajitpur: From Ashtagram, Bholanathji came to Bajitpur on a transfer.

The township of Bajitpur has acquired special significance for the devotees of Sri Ma as the place where she went through the various processes of intensive sadhana. How this came about may be best related in her own words; "One day in Bajitpur I had as usual gone to the pond near the house where we lived, for my daily bath. While pouring the water over my head, the kheyala came to me, 'how would it be to play the role of a Sadhaka? And so the lila began" These two words used so constantly with reference to Sri Ma, perhaps need to be explained a little. Kheyala may be best explained by the words 'a spontaneous thought', distinct from an act of will or a wish for some desired end. It generally came into being perhaps taking shape out of the needs of her companions.

Once expressed it was seen that a concatenation of events led to its fulfillment. Sometime kheyala could be invoked by repeated requests or deflected also. Sri Ma seemed equally agreeable toward any of the results accruing from her kheyala. Lila could be translated as "sportive play" -an activity, which is an end in itself. With Sri Ma, Kheyala was simultaneous with spontaneous action in relation to it. In the evening she again swept out her room and its precincts. She lit incense and made a circumambulation round the cottage with the burner in her hand. She took care of Bholanathji's needs on his return from work. Even to the detail of preparing a hookka for his after-dinner smoke. After Bholanathji had settled down, she asked his permission to engage in a little sadhana. This, he readily granted. So Sri Ma sat on the floor in a corner of their room and orally began to repeat the word 'Hari, Hari, Hari'…, for no better reason than that she had learnt to sing this Name from her father in her childhood. Bholanathji saw her becoming gradually absorbed in a world of inner joy. After a few days of this routine, he saw her assuming some yogic postures or asanas. The first of these was probably the siddhasana. Bholanathji knew of course that she had no previous knowledge of Yoga or Yogic asanas; they were happening to her. He said one day,"Why do you say 'Hari'? We are not Vaishnavas". Sri Ma asked, "Shall I then say Siva, Siva?" Bholanathji was satisfied. The change of Name had no effect on the kriyas of sadhana.

Sri Ma has said that she contemplated no visual forms when she repeated the words. The sound was all in all. The syllables were like the resonance being struck off an all-pervasive beat. Her body was as if in tune with the universal rhythm of that power, which underpins all that exists. Her body became as if an instrument for the play of this cosmic music. She seemed to become one with the sound of the letters that she uttered; her limbs, her entire body moved rhythmically as if in vibrant dance-forms of an extra-ordinary choreography directed by an inner Power. Sometimes she lay for many hours absolutely still and totally absorbed in an inner bliss. At such times her body emanated a radiance which was visible to onlookers, Bholanathji watched her enthralled never doubting the genuineness of the manifestations; he was able to brush aside adverse comments from some of the neighbours who failed to understand that they were witnessing the unfolding of the magnetic personality of Sri Ma who had the kheyala to reveal herself in the role of a sadhaka.

Sri Ma lived the life of a pilgrim on the path of spiritual endeavour for nearly six years; during this time she initiated herself and proceeded thereafter in a more systematic manner. Bholanathji realized that he was in the presence of a very special embodiment of Divine Power

Sri Ma lived the life of a pilgrim on the path of spiritual endeavour for nearly six years; during this time she initiated herself and proceeded thereafter in a more systematic manner. Bholanathji realized that he was in the presence of a very special embodiment of Divine Power. He himself accepted the much-coveted initiation from Sri Ma within the first year of this manifestation. Thereafter their relationship acquired a new dimension – that of Guru and disciple, although Sri Ma never changed in her attitude of complete obedience and deference to Bholanathji's wishes.

Referring to this period of her life, Sri Ma has said, "Sadhanas by which man endeavours to attain self-realization are of endless variety, and each variety has innumerable aspects. All these revealed themselves to me as a part of myself". In later years she had occasion to talk about her experiences in select gatherings of ascetics, scholars or other seekers of Truth. The pandits have marvelled at her knowledge of all tenets of faith, in all their doctrinal details. Sri Ma has said that even so she has not talked about one thousandth part of all that was revealed to her during her years of intensive sadhana. Sometime in 1922 she became maunam that is silent. This silence came as a mark of the fulfillment of sadhana. After the period of maunam, she began to converse with visitors on religious topics.

From Bajitpur Sri Ma and Bholanath came to Dhaka on April 10, 1924. Bholanath became the Manager of the Shahbagh Gardens, a part of the Estates of the Nawabzadi Pyari Bano. Many of the people who had known them in Ashtagram and Bajitpur had relations in Dhaka. The rumour gained ground that the young housewife in the Shahbagh Gardens was gifted with great spiritual powers. Visitors came out of curiosity and stayed to become life-long devotees.

In accordance with the orthodox customs of those times Sri Ma kept herself veiled in public. If Bholanathji asked her to speak to anyone, she would do so but not otherwise. Women, of course, were always free to visit and soon there was a crowd round her. The men continued to be at a disadvantage because they were mindful of public opinion, but here Bholanathji played an important role. Soon he began to be looked up to as Baba Bholanath, a person commanding respect in his own right. Under his aegis, the swelling crowds assumed the shape of an ever increasing but close-knit family.

Among the early devotees were Sri Jyotish Chandra Rai, who came to be known as Bhaiji in this circle; Sri Shashanka Mohan Mukherji (later Swami Akhandanandaji) and his daughter

Adorini Devi, known to all devotees as Gurupriya Devi or Didi. Sri Nishikanta Mitra, Sri Pran Gopal Mukherjee, Sri Niranjan Rai, Sri Baaul Chandra Basak (Bholanathji's life long friend) and many many others.

Sri Ma's parents were invited by Bholanath to come and stay at Shahbagh. They came to be known as Didima (Mother's Mother) and Dadamashai (mother's father).

From them, the devotees of Dhaka heard about Sri Ma's childhood days. Bholanathji's sisters and brothers with their families also came together in Dhaka after many years. One sister remarked "After our father's death we had become rather scattered; now Badhuthakurani (a term of endearment for a brother's wife) is making it possible for us to come together as a family again".

In Dhaka, Sri Ma lived amidst an atmosphere of the miraculous. Her healing touch was sought by strangers from far and near. She was seen in ecstatic states of samadhi and mahabhava during kirtans. An eyewitness account of a mahabhava on the occasion of a kirtan is described in these words: "At one moment Sri Ma was sitting like one of us. The next moment she had changed completely. Her body was swaying rhythmically. Her sari's border fell back from over her head. Her eyes were closed and the entire body swayed to the rhythmn of the kirtana. With her body still swaying, she stood up or rather was, as if drawn upwards on her foot. It looked as if Sri Ma had left her body, which had become an instrument in the hands of an invisible power. It was obvious to all of us that there was no will motivating her actions. Sri Ma was evidently quite oblivious of her surroundings. She circled round the room as if wafted along by the wind. Occasionally, her body would start falling to the ground, but before it completed the movement it would regain its upright position, just like a wind-blown leaf which flutters toward the ground and then is uplifted and blown forward by a fresh gust of wind."

Sri Ma moved in this manner with the kirtan party for a few moments. After such bhavas she would lie in a samadhi for many hours. It was always Bholanathji who decided when to try and rouse her. She had this kheyala of obeying him, so when he called her repeatedly, she would somehow open her eyes and say, "You want me to get up?" in lisping and slurred tones. At this time he would ask the women to rub her hands and feet gently and keep talking to her and make her answer some questions. In this way slowly Sri Ma would be drawn back to the ordinary world. Didi Gurupriya writes in wonder "It amazed me that Sri Ma so naturally entered into a state of God-intoxication, a state which is coveted by sadhakas of all time. No, not God-intoxication, her state could not be called that, I do not know how to describe a state which was at once sublime and yet normal".

This interplay of the dimensions of normalcy and transcendence was a constant and inalienable feature of Sri Ma's behaviour. Sometimes it was likened to a sudden play of lightning in the skies. One description is, "It was like simultaneously experiencing sunlight and moonlight. Before one could be dazzled and overwhelmed by the rays of the sun, one would be soothed and reassured by the gentle moonbeams".

These states were frequent and visible to all at this time but they had happened in her childhood and while she was with Revati Mohan's family as well. They had not been understood by her companions of those times and been dismissed as some mild kind of fits which would pass away as she grew older. Sri Ma's overall deportment was so radiant and cheerful that it was easy to discount a few signs of sudden withdrawals into an inner world of mystery.

The halcyon days of happy gatherings round Sri Ma were rather short lived. Sri Ma set out on her travels in 1927. Baba Bholanath liked to visit places of pilgrimage. They travelled

quite extensively. The devotees of Dhaka gradually got accustomed to Sri Ma's frequent absences. It became clear that Sri Ma had the kheyala to leave Dhaka. The devotees had built a small Ashram for her but Sri Ma's kheya1a to move out proved too strong. Accompanied by Bholanath and Bhaiji Sri Ma left Dhaka on June 2, 1932.

Travelling in a haphazard way she happened to arrive at Dehradun. From here they found their way to Raipur a remote village in the interior. They took up their abode in the dilapidated Siva Temple a little way from the village. This was the beginning of a new way of life for two of them. Bholanathji devoted himself to his sadhana wholeheartedly. Bhaiji tried his hand at rendering such services, which so far he had received from his own servants. To sweep and clean, wash clothes, cook primitive kind of food was hard work for him. Sometimes Sri Ma helped him out but in general she wandered around alone or sat surrounded by the village women.

When she returned to Dehradun she and Bhaiji stayed at the Manohar Temple in Ananda Chowk. Bholanathji spent almost 3 years in Uttarkashi in doing his own tapasya; In Dehradun she came in touch with all the Kashmiri families who resided nearby. Sri Hari Ram Joshi became a devotee and a great admirer of Bhaiji. He was a man of strong convictions; moreover he had the courage of his convictions. Having given his allegiance to Sri Ma, he tried his best to bring all his friends to her feet. He was instrumental in introducing Smt. Kamala Nehru to Sri Ma. This proved to be a meeting which led to other ties being forged with other people from far and near. Smt. Kamala Nehru's one-pointed devotion to Sri Ma was remarkable in its depth and strength. She carried her memories to Switzerland and so influenced some of her friends, that they came to India to see Sri Ma. Mahatma Gandhi came to know a lot about Sri Ma from Kamalaji. He was so impressed by all that he heard that he sent his trusted right-hand man Sri Jamnalal Bajaj to Sri Ma. He in his turn became so dedicated a devotee that Sri Ma had the kheyala to travel to Wardha after his unexpected death and so met Gandhiji himself. In later years Sri Jawaharlal Nehru and Indiraji came to Sri Ma drawn to her inevitably by their memories of the last days of Kamalaji.

The Raja Sahab of Solon, met Sri Ma around this time. He became one of the foremost devotees and was known to all as Jogibhai. Dehra Dun became another Dhaka. The tradition of joyous gatherings spread to other towns such as Delhi, Meerut, Lucknow, Solon and Simla. At Simla the festival of Hari-kirtan under the aegis of the Hari Sabha received a new lease of life in Sri Ma's presence and by Bholanathji's enthusiastic participation. Bholanathji had rejoined Sri Ma on coming down from Uttarkashi. He had been introduced to the new devotees and accepted whole-heartedly as Pitaji (father).

The swelling tides of the happy crowd unknown to themselves were facing two crises : Bhaiji passed away in Almora in August 1937 and Bholanathji himself left his sorrowing family of devotees in May 1938 in Kishenpur Ashram. The passing away of Bholanathji resulted in a new understanding of Sri Ma and her ways. Sri Ma had been a very devoted wife and she had tirelessly rendered personal service to him whenever he had been ill. During his last illness she was constantly at his bedside. He died with her hand on his head and breathing the word ananda. It was felt that he was giving expression to his own state of an ananda and peace.

Most of the devotees had thought that Sri Ma would be distraught but they were amazed to see that there were no signs of grief. She remained as serene as always. She noted their reaction and said gently, "Do you start to wail and cry if a person goes to another room in the

house? This death is inevitably connected with this life. In the sphere of Immortality, where is the question of death and loss? Nobody is lost to me".

Sri Ma's followers began to understand a little of the meaning of her total detachment and yet an overflowing compassion for her people. As the years passed the enigma of her personality deepened; from the very moment of her birth she had been fully self-conscious; she was not a sadhika, yet the stages of various sadhanas were revealed through her body and reached their culmination without her being engaged as a doer, in a very short time span. This might have taken aeons for an ordinary sadhak, even for a single path of sadhana. She was not a teacher yet people learned from her lucid explanations of various complex spiritual queries put forward even by erudite scholars and contemporary authorities on those subjects.

She seemed fully aware of all doctrinal differences, never confusing one with the other in her conversations with the learned pandits; yet she had not been initiated into any particular religious order or trained by any yogic instructor. She had not encountered any Guru who could have exerted any influence on her life. In fact she had never retired from the world to become a recluse, neither did she withdraw herself from her kith and kin. She had not performed sadhana as it is generally understood in the tradition, yet she could speak with authority on all aspects of the life of a religious quest for enlightenment. Such are the facts why the word 'unique' is applied for describing her.

Sri Ma continued to move around in her own style of unstructured itineraries but she did not always choose her companions. It was a motley crowd which surrounded her. Many times it so happened that many in her entourage did not speak the same language. People from different provinces, different walks of life, mingled together in happy throngs. It was experienced that Sri Ma would accept invitations for religious functions. So, the devotees would arrange for Bhagavat Saptah, Durga Puja, Chandipath etc. in their towns. They would pray for her presence at these functions. Wherever Sri Ma stayed, it immediately became the centre for a gathering of thousands. Sri Ma in her compassionate regard for the organisers moved out as soon as things began to get out of hand. There was no central management in Sri Ma's vicinity; whoever was able, took charge for as long as he could. Matters arranged themselves as it were. It is difficult to describe the sheer impromptu nature of management, which took place near Sri Ma. Unless one has experienced it for oneself, it is not possible to credit the utter fortuitous nature of a concurrence of events which seemed to fulfil Sri Ma's kheyala regarding her travels, companions or at times her places of retreat. In all the major cities, Sri Ma visited frequently, the devotees got together to construct one Ashram after another but it did not serve the purpose of restricting her movements or providing her with some comforts while she stayed in one place because as often as not she would not visit the Ashram at all but go some place else.

In 1940 Sri Ma came in close touch with Sri Prabhu Dattaji Maharaj of Jhunsi, a Mahatma of considerable renown. He invited her to join in their council of sadhus at Jhunsi in 1944. Here other Mahatmas came to know her, notably Sri Haribabaji Maharaj, Sri Chakrapaniji and Sri Sharananandaji. So far the Sadhu Samaj had avoided her because she happened to be in the form of a woman. Sri Prabhu Dattaji broke down this artificial barrier. Thereafter Haribabaji Maharaj gave her the highest honour possible. The heads of other Monastic Orders recognized in her the quintessence of the Upanishadic tradition and accepted her word as Shastra itself.

At Sri Ma's kheyala a great Savitri Yajna was started at Varanasi in the newly built Ashram on January 14, 1947. The samkalpa was for "The Good of Mankind".

There was great tension in the country just before Independence in August of the same year. Notwithstanding all these negative factors the Yajna proceeded unhindered and came to a spectacular conclusion on January 14, 1950. A great concourse of renowned Mahatmas graced the occasion. It was attended by princes, artists of repute, political personalities, and the ordinary mass of people. In Sri Ma's presence all functions take on an extra-ordinary glamour. This yajna solemn and grand in itself was overwhelming in its impact on the participants.

The most attractive function under Sri Ma's aegis turned out to be the Samyam Saptah. Sri Ma very often spoke on the importance of observing restraints in one's way of life at least once a month if not once a week. Sri Jogibhai, the President of the Sri Anandamayi Sangha suggested that a Saptah of samyam be arranged in Sri Ma's vicinity so that all devotees could assemble for this purpose.The first such saptah was organised in Varanasi Ashram in 1952. The participants would observe total fast on the first and last days.

In between a menu of very simple meals once a day was drawn up by Sri Ma herself. Under her guidance the programme for the whole day was sketched like this. After personal daily puja etc., all participants would gather in the Central Hall for listening to scriptural discourses, kirtans and meditation. Doors would be closed so that there would be no disturbances. After a short break during the afternoon for food and a little rest, the Vratis (participants) would assemble for the evening session and so on.

The popularity of this function was phenomenal. The whole Ashram geared up to it. Mahatmas came from far and near. People heard learned lectures from orators whom they would never have had occasion to hear in the ordinary course. They heard rare scriptures and listened to good music. The best part of the day was at 9.30 P.M. when Sri Ma answered questions from the audience. The whole day passed by like a flash in looking forward to this half hour of matri satsang. The participants were amazed that they could live like ascetics for a week so effortlessly.

The best way to understand Sri Ma is not to compare her with any of the luminaries in our spiritual skies. The recognition that she gained in her own lifetime was just by her presence. This is what Swami Chinmayananda said about her in Bangalore (June 1978) 'When the sun shines nobody needs to demonstrate the sunshine'. The harmony of opposites was the underlying theme of her way of life. Amidst the splendour and magnificence which seemed inevitable wherever she was, she lived like an ascetic. Throughout her life she was a very small eater. Apart from the months of abstention from food, which happened periodically, she followed other rigourisms. For many years she used to eat on alternate days. When remonstrated with Sri Ma would say, "It is not necessary to eat at all to preserve the body. I eat only because a semblance of normal behaviour must be kept up so that you should not feel uncomfortable with me." The intake of food was not related to any of her illnesses. Actually she was in perfect health when she was not eating anything. Illnesses came and went following a rhythm of their own.

In her time she met with nearly all the political dignitaries who rose to power after Independence. They did not talk about state affairs with her. She only spoke about God and the religious aspirations of man.

Some devotees in praise of her all-encompassing message sometimes say that she welcomed all faiths as true paths to God. This could be an understatement. The fact was that Sri Ma saw no differences which had to be cemented; to her, indeed,everything was the One only. The same may be said about her treatment of women. She recognised no inferiority or superiority. She demanded (if such a word can be used for her) the same high

quality of asceticism from the brahmacharis as well as brahmacharinis of the Ashram. Purity of speech, action and thoughts was ever the ideal, which she set forth for all travellers on the path of God-realization.

Sri Ma when speaking with modern young people, showed herself to be fully aware of the trends of the times; even so, her interlocutors could never make her accede to their demands for compromises. She with great humour and understanding could always bring them around to accepting her request to begin the search for Him who is hidden in the cave of the heart.

It could be said that for all devotees, the following text expresses their sentiments regarding Sri Ma : bhidyatehrdayagranthicsahhidyante sarvasainsayah kshiyante casya karmani tasmin drste paravare.

The knot of the heart is penetrated, all doubts are resolved All bondages are destroyed on seeing Him who is here and beyond. Mundakopanisad 11.2.8

In retrospect it now seems that Sri Ma started the process of withdrawing herself much ahead of time. She became increasingly unavailable because it was said she was not well. All her devotees know that illness happened to her because it was not her kheyala to deny them access to her. Many times she had said, “Why do you feel so antagonistic to illnesses? They also come to this body like you do. Do I tell you to go away?” Acceding to the prayers of her companions Sri Ma had been seen many times, also, to perform certain Yogic kriyas to get rid of her ailments. In the late seventies and in 1981 she did not have kheyala to respond to any kind of prayers for her recovery. She went about fulfilling her various engagements. She did not look ill but as beautiful and serene as ever; but definitely the mass of devotees got used to the idea of not getting her darshana as easily as always. For all practical purposes she had withdrawn herself from public audiences apart from a few exceptions. Her last kheyala seemed to have been for the performance of the ati Rudra Yajna at Kankhal. This was the greatest of the Vedic Yajnas. Under Sri Ma’s Guidance it was celebrated with such splendour and scrupulous adherence to every detail of scriptural injunctions that the Savants said Sri Ma had initiated the Satya Yuga in the fron Age of Kali.

In the last days Sri Ma was serene but uncharacteristically seemed to be removing herself beyond the prayers of people around her. Ordinarily she always gave the greatest heed to the words of the Mahatmas, but now to all prayers for her own recovery, she would smile and say, “There is no kheyala”‘.

Sri Jagadguru Sankaracharya of Shringeri, Sarada Peetham, wanted to invite her to Sringeri on the occasion of the Annual Durga Puja and urged that she should get rid of her illness speedily. She replied in her usual gentle tones, “This body has no illness, Pitaji. It is being recalled toward the Unmanifest. Whatever you see happening now is conducive toward that event”. At the moment of bidding him farewell the next day (July 2nd) she again reiterated her inability to accede to his wishes, saying “As the Atma, I shall ever abide with you”.

Sri Ma, in other ways weaned her devotees from her physical presence. She did not answer letters but the correspondents felt her presence in their hearts and their questions answered. She did not attend any of the functions, which were being performed with the usual circumspection at their proper times in the Ashram. She had stopped taking food for many months. The attending girls could give her a few drops of water only at odd moments.

Sri Ma spent her last days at Kishenpur Ashram. She made no farewells apart from saying “Sivaya namah” on the night of the 25th; this mantra is indicative of the final dissolution of worldly bondages. She became Unmanifest on Friday evening of August 27th, 1982 around

8 P.M. Kankhal at the foothill of the Himalayas is holy land. All monastic orders have their HeadQuarters at Haridwar.

By a consensus of opinion the entire body of the Mahatmas came together to assume charge of Sri Ma's physical remains. The highest honour was given to her; a procession of thousands escorted the vehicle carrying her body from Dehra Dun to Kankhal. The Mahanirvani Akhadha arranged for the last rites of Samadhi. As Sri Ma had said she did belong to everybody and so everybody participated in bidding farewell to the human body which had sustained their beloved Ma for 86 years. Sri Ma came at a time when India as well as the world passed through many crises. She remained as one of the people, throughout it, imparting hope and solace and upholding the age old ideals of our tradition through overwhelming impacts of alien influences. She fully understood the existential implications of the present age of technology and by her way of being in the world put it in a correct perspective for those who wished to see beyond it. That God is as much present in the world given over to scientific research as in the age of mythology we may say is the "Message" conveyed by her sojourn on earth.

We think the soil of Bharatvarsha is holy. Once in a while we see in India, not merely a teacher, or just a saint but an exemplar of the way of life which is the quintessence of her spirit. India cherishes a coming together of heaven and earth, a commingling of the timeless order and the order of time; a meeting of horizons of the eternal yearning in man and the descent of Grace. Once in a while such a dream is realized. We find a Teacher, a Jagadguru, who not only awakens the longing for the quest for Truth but enkindles and sustains faith in its ultimate fulfillment.

Sri Ma will ever remain with us in the form of her immortal words, the dearest of which are, "Ma is (I am) here, what is there to worry about?"

(Ma Achen, kiser cinta?)

From "In Your Heart – Is My Abode, Life and teachings of Sri Ma Anandamayi," by Bithika Mukerji

Sri Ma's teachings:

Her instructions are of a universal type meant for all men, yet their real import is not always comprehended by people like us. Still, when some of her words illumine the mind of a particular person, what he realizes by his own limited knowledge finds expression in his life according to his own capacity to move forward. It is not easy to imagine how infinitely various are the streams of water flowing from the Himalayas to plains of India through glaciers, cataracts, rivers, streamlets and springs, enriching and fertilising many sterile tracts. Although the Himalayas do not lose anything by sending out these perpetual streams, the welfare of the world is being secured by them. It is similar in the case of Mother and her devotees.

The central theme of all her words and expressions is this: Life and religion are one. All that you do to maintain your life, your everyday work and play, all your attempts to earn a living, should be done with sincerity, love and devotion, with a firm conviction that true living means virtually perfecting one's spiritual existence in tune with the universe. To bring about this synthesis, religious culture should be made as natural and easy as taking our food and drink when we are hungry and thirsty.

Mother says "With earnestness, love and goodwill carry out life's everyday duties and try to elevate yourself step by step. In all human activities let there be a live contact with the Divine

and you will not have to leave off anything. Your work will then be done well and you will be on the right track to find the Master.

Just as a mother nourishes her child with all possible care and affection and makes him grow up into a healthy boy and a handsome youth, so you will find the subtle touches of the Divine Mother shaping your inner life and making you reach your full height and stature.

Whatever work you have to do, do it with a singleness of purpose, with all the simplicity, contentment and joy you are capable of.

Thus only will you be able to reap the best fruit of work. In fullness of time, the dry leaves of life will naturally drop off and new ones shoot forth."

Mother says: "Just as there is a definite time-table for work at school, office or the shop, so should we set apart for divine contemplation a few minutes out of the twenty-four hours of every day, preferably in the morning and evening. One must make a fixed resolve that this little time shall be dedicated to God throughout life. During this period no worldly activity should be allowed to encroach upon the contemplation of God.

A fixed time for prayer or meditation must be allotted to all the members of the family including the servants. If this practice is continued for long, divine contemplation will become a part of your nature. Once the habit is established, the future course of your life will be made quite easy. You will feel the flow of the mysterious Divine Grace feeding all your thoughts and giving you new strength. You get a pension or bonus after years of hard work, so that you need no longer earn your livelihood. In the spiritual realm the reward for good, sincere and selfless work is even far greater and can be obtained more easily.

"Your earthly pension expires with your life,

but the divine pension continues long, long after death.

Those who amass money, store it up in a hidden chamber of their house, add to this store what they can save from time to time, and keep a constant watch over their treasure. So also reserve a little corner of your mind and heart for God and always steal an opportunity to add to your stock in the shape of the invocation of His name or some pious work or divine thought.

If you cannot do anything else, at least morning and evening at the appointed time, lay down your body, mind and life before Him in salutation and surrender, and think of Him just a little."

One day Mother was showing the various ways of saluting God and said: "Lose yourself altogether when bowing down to God with a single-minded devotion and you will obtain joy and power in proportion.

In this connection she added: "There are two kinds of pranamas : Offering to Him your whole body and mind with all thoughts, desires, sense-impressions, love, affection, devotion, just like emptying the contents of a full pitcher to its last drop. The other way is like scattering face-powder through the minute holes of a powder-box : the major portion of your thoughts and desires is kept back in a hidden chamber of your mind, and only a little dust is allowed to escape."

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Ref: avatarsandyogis.com

Stories about Anandamayi Ma

Anandamayee Ma hides her beauty

This incident took place when Anandamayee Ma was newly married. She was about sixteen or so. Her husband, Bholanath, was much older than she was. One day her husband brought a friend of his home. Bholanath wanted to show off what a beautiful wife he had.

At that time, Anandamayee Ma's name was Nirmala Sundari. She was extremely beautiful, both inwardly and outwardly. On that day, when Bholanath arrived home with his friend, Bholanath saw to his great surprise that his wife had put a towel over her head and covered her face.

Bholanath said to her, "What are you doing? What are you doing? You do not want to see my friend?"

But Nirmala did not listen to him. She kept the towel on her head. Then Bholanath became furious. He asked her, “Who do you think you are?”

Nirmala took off the towel and said, “I am Brahman all-pervading.”

The husband was furious and the friend was amused.

The Guru and the disciple in one form

Anandamayee Ma did not have any Guru. At first she thought that it was necessary to have a Guru. Then she felt that it was not necessary. She prayed and meditated. Finally, in a deep meditation, she felt that her highest Self was the Guru and her lower self was the disciple. This moment she played the role of a disciple; next moment she played the role of her Master. This is how she initiated herself.

Possessed by God

Anandamayee Ma did not listen to her husband. She passed her time in prayer and meditation. She was all the time self-absorbed. Her husband could not tolerate her behaviour. He used to beat her quite hard until she was black and blue. This went on for years.

Then one day she told him, “Wait for another two years. Then you will not be able to beat me any more.”

What happened? Within two years she gathered many devotees and her husband became frightened. He could not continue to treat his wife in such a rough manner. He touched her feet and begged her for forgiveness. Then he became her first real disciple.

The villagers were all shocked. How could a husband become his wife’s disciple? But Bholanath said, “I see her divinity. Previously I thought that she was possessed by demons. Now I see that she is possessed by God.”

Anandamayee Ma ceases to feed herself

One evening, in 1924, Anandamayee Ma said, “I am not going to eat food with my own hand any longer.”

From that day on, she was always fed by her disciples. They had to put food into her mouth. This went on until she left the body in 1982.

Each one is right

Once a disciple of Anandamayee Ma asked her, “Please tell me who you are. I want to know.”

She replied, “It is up to you. Whatever you think of me, I am that. If you think I am this, you are right. If another person thinks I am something else, he is right. As you think of me, so I am.”

Anandamayee Ma solves the religious disputes

India’s greatest religious festival is the Kumbha Mela. It takes place every twelve years. Millions of people attend, including many religious leaders and all kinds of devotees.

Sometimes the religious leaders go there to enjoy debating, and sometimes even quarrelling and fighting. Anandamayee Ma was also present on a number of occasions. Some leaders felt that they should go to her for wisdom. They used to come to her and she used to advise

them. It happened for quite a few years that leaders of religious groups used to come to her for her wisdom-light. In this way, she was the one to prevent them from quarrelling and fighting.

The western world comes to know of Anandamayi Ma

It was Paramahansa Yogananda who brought Anandamayee Ma's light to America. He wrote the Autobiography of a Yogi and in his autobiography he devoted a chapter to "The Bengali 'Joy-Permeated Mother'."

It was because Paramahansa Yogananda wrote about his meeting with Anandamayee Ma that the Western world came to know about her.

The real Guru

Anandamayee Mas opinion was that each person is his own guru because each person listens to himself. He listens to his mind or his heart, so he is his own guru. Whatever comes to his mind, he does. Whatever he feels, he does. Therefore, each individual is his own guru.

But again, she felt that there is only one real Guru, one highest Guru, and that is the Self.

Anandamayee Ma's simple advice

Anandamayee Ma used to advise her disciples to laugh and laugh and laugh. She said, "If you laugh, then you minimise your sufferings and also you unburden the sadness and sorrows of other human beings."

This is why she encouraged her disciples to laugh to their heart's content.

The subject of mother's bath

In the evening of her life, sometimes for days Anandamayee Ma did not take a bath. Once one disciple said to another, "Mother does not take a bath at all."

The other disciple said, "Why does she have to take a bath? She has such a beautiful and pleasing fragrance in her body. She does not have to take a bath. She is not like us."

The Mother overheard their conversation and the following day she bathed thirty times! The disciples were horrified, and they never brought up the subject again. Then, as usual, Anandamayee Ma stopped taking baths on a regular basis.

Ref: hindu-blog.com

A collection of 108 Quotes of Sri Anandamayi Ma

Sri Anandamayi Ma (April 30, 1896 – August 27, 1982) was one of the greatest spiritual figures of the 20th century. Sri Anandamayi Ma quotes are mostly from books, magazines, newspapers and videos. These collections of 108 quotes are based on Sri Anandamayi Ma teachings and have been collected over a period of 12 years. Born as Nirmala Sundari, the name Anandamayi Ma was given to her by her devotees to describe her perpetual state of divine joy.

Joys and sorrows are time-born and cannot last. Therefore, do not be perturbed by these. The greater the difficulties and obstructions, the more intense will be your endeavor to cling to His feet and the more will your prayer increase from within. And when the time is ripe, you will gain mastery over this power.

In RAMA (GOD), who is the dispeller of all sorrow, there is arama — rest and ease; where RAMA is not, there is vyarama — discomfort and disease.

It is impossible to continue on the spiritual path without some inner experience occurring

The whole manifestation is but a display of GOD's divine power — GOD Itself as vibhuti (creative power).

Forgetting that GOD is the sole Beloved, one has come to love sense objects.

If you examine yourself, you will see. There is beauty in the birds and in the animals. They too eat and drink like us, mate and multiply; but there is this difference: we can realize our true nature, the Atman. Having been born as human beings, we must not waste this opportunity. At least for a few seconds every day, we must enquire as to who we are. It is no use taking a return ticket over and over again. From birth to death, and death to birth is ‘samsara.’ But really we have no birth and death. We must realize that.

Precious gems are profoundly buried in the earth and can only be extracted at the expense of great labor.

Exert yourself to the limits of your power, however feeble. He is there to fulfill what has been left undone.

Unconditional surrender to Him is the best solace for man.

God's name is He Himself - The name and the named are identical.

The more one thinks of one's Ishta (beloved Deity), the firmer will one's faith in Him grow.

You will have peace only if you rise above worldly desires.

There is nothing in this world, yet everyone is madly pursuing this nothing - some more, some less.

Man is no other than the Self; but he wrongly thinks of himself as a separate individual centered in his body and identified by a particular name.

Love and serve your consort and children as Divine manifestations. Perform all work as God's service. Do not allow your mind to wander here and there. Endeavor to make it one pointed. Have one single end in view.

All sorrow is due to the fact that many are seen where there is only one. Duality is pain. So long as man does not wake up to his identity with the one, the round of birth and death continues for him.

Time devours ceaselessly. No sooner is childhood over than youth takes its place – the one that swallows up the other. This occurs so slowly that one hardly notices it happening. But in reality, appearance, continuance, and disappearance occur simultaneously in one place. Everything is infinite; infinity and finitude are indeed the same. There is one thread in a garland, yet there are gaps between the flowers. It is the gaps that cause want and sorrow. To fill them is to be free.

Try to treat with equal love all the people with whom you have relations. Thus the abyss between 'myself' and 'yourself' will be filled in, which is the goal of all religious worship.

Ever afterward, though the dance of creation change around me in the hall of eternity, I shall be the same.

Do not set your hopes on anything less than supreme beatitude.

The life in the world is to be on the way to Self- Realization.

Everything originates from light and everything in its essence is light, even You.

There is one unchanging indivisible reality which, though unmanifest, reveals itself in infinite multiplicity and diversity.

The quest after truth and to be Truthful is a human beings duty. Do your utmost to become anchored in Truth and spend much time in the contemplation of the Lord in a quiet secluded place. Human beings have to be dwellers of the Inner Cave so that the Supreme Being who resides within may be revealed.

Blame may be likened to cow dung. When it lies about just anywhere it is of no use. But when, mixed with earth and turned into manure, it is put under plants, what lovely flowers, fruits and grain will grow due to it. Similarly, if an aspirant can bear to be blamed and criticized, that is to say, if he uses it to improve his character, it will be beneficial – just as the soil is made fertile by manure.

No attempt is futile; everything serves a purpose. Suppose you are traveling somewhere by railway. In order to catch the train you have to first go by boat, then descend from the boat, get into a horse carriage and then catch a bus which will take you to the station. Although your aim is a journey by train, you cannot say that the boat, horse carriage, bus and so forth are of no use. Similarly you should understand that everything you do in order to realize God is helpful. Nothing at all is waste. By whatever Name you may invoke Him, you effort will be crowned with success. The main thing is to cling to the Name with constancy.

Everyone thirsts for peace, but few people understand that perfect peace cannot be obtained as long as the inner soul is not filled with the presence of God.

Man’s mind is clouded by worldly ties. But there is no cause for despair. With purity, unflinching faith and burning eagerness go ahead and you will realize your true Self.

Sense enjoyment acts like slow poison. You are driven thereby towards death. Therefore, it is man's duty as a human being to get into the current that leads to immortality.

Your sole duty is to remember that He alone is, and that everything is His doing. "Invoke Him and be constantly intent on realizing Him.

With earnestness, love and goodwill carry out life’s everyday duties and try to elevate yourself step by step. In all human activities let there be a live contact with the Divine and you will not have to leave off anything. Your work will then be done well and you will be on the right track to find the Master.

Just as a mother nourishes her child with all possible care and affection and makes him grow up into a healthy boy and a handsome youth, so you will find the subtle touches of the Divine Mother shaping your inner life and making you reach your full height and stature.

Enquire: 'Who am I?' and you will find the answer. Look at a tree: from one seed arises a huge tree; from it comes numerous seeds, each one of which in its turn grows into a tree. No two fruits are alike. Yet it is one life that throbs in every particle of the tree. So, it is the same Atman everywhere.

The lute of man's short life is strung with so many strings; they have to be cut asunder. There is no real substance to these many strings. It is futile to let one's thoughts be occupied with the ties by which one is bound. Why behave like a fool and return again and again to this world of illusion?

Whatever work you have to do, do it with a singleness of purpose, with all the simplicity, contentment and joy you are capable of. Thus only will you be able to reap the best fruit of work. In fullness of time, the dry leaves of life will naturally drop off and new ones shoot forth.

Householders should emulate the ancient rishis (sages) who were married men living with their families and leading a life dedicated to God.

Just as fire burns away all dross and rubbish, so the three fold suffering purges man's heart from all impurity and results in a growing single mindedness in his search after Truth. When he becomes deeply conscious of his weakness and tormented by the thoughts of his undesirable impulses and distressing characteristics, when afflictions like poverty, bereavement or humiliation make him feel his life is futile, then and then only does he develop real faith and religious fervor, and becomes anxious to surrender himself at the feet of the Supreme Being. Suffering should therefore be welcomed. Never does the soft moonlight appear more soothing than after the scorching heat of a summer day.

One is born to experience various kinds of joys and sorrows according to one's desire. For the time being, God comes to you in the disguise of suffering. He is purifying you in this manner. The suffering is for your own best. A mother gives a slap to her beloved child for its own good, in order to keep it on the right path. When a fond mother gives her baby a bath, the child may scream desperately, yet the mother will not let the baby go until she has thoroughly washed and scrubbed him.

Happiness that depends on anything outside of you, be it a wife, a child, money, fame, friends cannot last. But if you find happiness in God who is everywhere, all pervading, who is your own self, that is real happiness.

Renunciation is the giving up of the idea of separateness, not the giving up of things.

A spiritual traveller must not allow his mind to be distracted by anything. He should proceed with determination towards his goal.

It is but the self that calls itself, and none other than the self that realizes itself.

Relative happiness, that is to say, happiness depending on the fulfillment of any worldly desire, ends in grief.

You will have peace only if you rise above worldly desires.

Among all creatures, man alone has been endowed with the capacity to realize God.

Who am I? This realization is the purpose of human life.

Control your desires for sense objects. Be moderate in eating and sleeping. As a pilgrim on the path to God, you should be content with such food and sleep as will help you to remain fit for the onward march.

Whatever may be your short comings, don't be depressed, don't lose hope. Try to improve yourself.

By God's grace one is born as a human being. Try to make the best of this opportunity. Everything is possible for man.

The highest satsang is to have the company of the one true Self. The second is to enjoy the company of those who have realized this. The third is the company of a profound spiritual book. Remain in the company of the enlightened ones and as the sun sets fire to the sky, the fire of their wisdom will burn your ego to ashes.

Who is it that loves and who that suffers? He alone stages a play with Himself. The individual suffers because he perceives duality. Find the One everywhere and in everything and there will be an end to pain and suffering.

Always bear this in mind: Everything is in God's hands, and you are His tool to be used by Him as He pleases. Try to grasp the significance of 'All Is His'. and you will immediately feel free from all burdens. What will be the result of your surrender to Him? None will seem alien, all will be your very own Self.

Among all creatures, man alone has been endowed with the capacity to realize God.

He is in all figures and forms, eternally enthroned in the hearts of all beings. It is true, He lives everywhere. Once one has achieved to see this, then one has seen and achieved everything. It means, to be fearless, sure, devoid of all conflicts, completely silent, imperishable.

Peace can be promised only then, when the mind is concentrated on what give us peace, and the eyes rest upon what strengthens peace, when ears listen to what fills the heart with peace and when you hear at all times the answer of the One IS himself peace.

It may be tiresome in the beginning to live in harmony with the highest ideals, but finally, it leads to a genuine sense of well-being and peace. One must learn to find joy in the sublime. If one is blessed with a human body, it is wrong not to live accordingly. Why should one go after animal instincts?

"Who am I? This realization is the purpose of human life."

The positive proof that the aspirant is centered in GOD is that one ceases to hate any person or object and that good qualities such as Love, Forgiveness, Patience, and Forbearance go on increasing in one.

Truth Itself will assist in every way one who has gone forth in search of Truth.

Thinking of anything other than GOD is what creates sorrow.

The mind does not obey me; very well, I shall not obey the mind either; I shalt continue to repeat the Lord's Name.

All sorrow comes from the sense of I and Mine. All sorrow is due to one's keeping apart from God.

Be anchored in fearlessness. What is worldly life but fear!

Our mind is the swiftest thing in creation. Let the mind move at its own speed constantly towards the One Aim, which is God.

Light is also in you, since it pervades all things. Everything originates from light, everything is in its essence is light.

Since the body is bound to get hurt at times, there must be suffering as long as one is identified with it.

Once a dog came to the ashram to beg for food, Anandamayi Ma placed some food close to wooden tigers that were so realistically painted that they appear as real tigers. The dog obviously was in a quandary. He was eager to eat the food but fear of the tigers kept him from touching it. Anandamayi Ma thereupon remarked that the dog found himself in the position of most human beings who are held captive by their imaginary fears.

The one who is the eternal the atman (true self), he himself is the traveler on the path of immortality. He is all in all, He alone is.

Often Anandamayi Ma uses the analogy of water or the ocean to explain how one can have different aspects. By varying the temperature, one can turn water into ice or steam, without changing its essential nature. Similarly, stormy weather can temporarily divide an ocean into individual waves but when calm returns, the waves merge into the Ocean. All come from one and return to one.

My consciousness has never associated itself with this temporary body. Before I came to this earth 'I was the same.' As a little girl, 'I was the same.' …. Ever afterward, though the dance of creation change around me in the hall of eternity, 'I shall be the same'.

Enquire: 'Who am I?' and you will find the answer. Look at a tree: from one seed arises a huge tree; from it comes numerous seeds, each one of which in its turn grows into a tree. No two fruits are alike. Yet it is one life that throbs in every particle of the tree. So, it is the same Atman everywhere.

Anandamayi Ma Quotes on Silence

Even when speech is suppressed, the activity of the mind still continues. All the same silence helps control the mind. As the mind dives deeper, its activity slackens off, and then one comes to feel that He Who provides for everything will arrange matters.

When the mind is agitated by thoughts of worldly things, the benefit that should be gained by abstaining from speech is lost. When the mind is centered on God, it keeps advancing steadily, and along with this emerges purity of body and mind. To let thoughts dwell on objects of the senses is a waste of energy.

By constantly dwelling on the thought of God all the granthis (knots) that make up ego are unraveled, and that which has to be realized will be realized.

To say 'through silence He is realized' is not correct, because Supreme Knowledge does not come 'through' anything. Supreme Knowledge reveals itself. For destroying the ‘veil’, there are suitable spiritual disciplines and practices.

Sayings of Ma Anandamayi – On the importance of laughter

Whenever you have the chance, laugh as much as you can. By this all the rigid knots in your body will be loosened. But to laugh superficially is not enough; your whole being must be united in laughter, both inwardly and outwardly.

Do you know how this is to be expressed? You literally shake with merriment from head to foot; so that it is impossible to tell which part of your body is most affected.

I want you to laugh with your whole countenance, with your whole heart and with all the breath of your life. (Source: Anandamayi – Her Life and Wisdom by Richard Lannoy)

Question and Answers with Sri Ma Anandamayi

Questioner: How is the idea of a benevolent God compatible with ruin and destruction in the history of peoples and lives of families and individuals?

Anandamayi Ma: Do you believe that God is the creator of this world and therefore its Lord?

Questioner agrees.

Anandamayi Ma: Very well, If God is the Lord of the world, He can do with it as he pleases. Suppose you have grown beautiful flowers in your garden, but decide to plant fruit trees in their place, won't you have to remove the flowers? If you have a fine house, but wish to build a larger and better one on the same plot, you demolish the old one. The freedom that is yours in small things, God exercises in great ones.

In both is He, in destruction as well as in construction. The history of nations, families and individuals is the great Lila (divine sport) that He stages with Himself

Teachings On Spiritual Path – Anandamayi Ma

By listening repeatedly to religious and philosophical discussions and discourses, the path to first hand knowledge of what has been heard gradually opens out. You know, it is as when water uninterruptedly dripping on a stone finally makes a hole in it, and then a flood may suddenly surge through, which will bring enlightenment.

Be it the perusal of Sacred Texts, listening to religious discourse, engaging in kirtana – god must be the alpha and omega of whatever is done. When reading, read about Him, when talking, talk of Him, and when singing, sing His praises.

These three practices are intrinsically the same; but because people respond differently, the same is expressed in three different ways to suit each person’s temperament and capacity for assimilation.

Essentially there is only He and He alone, although everyone has his own individual path that leads to Him.

What is the right path for each depends on his personal predilection, based on the specific character of his inner qualifications.

Ref: tripadvisor.in

Photos of Khankal Ashram, Hardwar

Ma Anandamayi Ashram in Haridwar

Ma Anandamayi Ashram is a spiritual place in Haridwar dedicated to Sri Ma Anandamayi, an eminent spiritual personality. She was a Bengali mystic and her mortal remains were buried at Ma Anandamayi Ashram. Located at Kankhal town, Ma Anandamayi Ashram is an centre of faith for many finders of spirituality. Visitors from all over the world visit the ashram and pay tribute to Ma Anandamayi.

Shree Shree Ma Anandamayi Ashram has several buildings in the well maintained ashram complex. Tourists can visit to Gayatri Yagnashala, Ati Rudra Yagnashala, Rudraksha Tree, Shankaracharya Hall, Annapurnasthal, Ma Anandamayee Museum and Ma Anandamayee Vidyapeeth in the ashram.

How To Reach Ma Anandamayi Ashram

Ma Anandamayi Ashram is located in Kankhal, 6 kms from Haridwar. One can reach at Ma Anandamayi Ashram by bus or taxi from Haridwar. Nearest railway station to reach Ma Anandamayi Ashram is Haridwar railway station (03 km) and airport at Jolly Grant Airport, Dehradun (38 kms).

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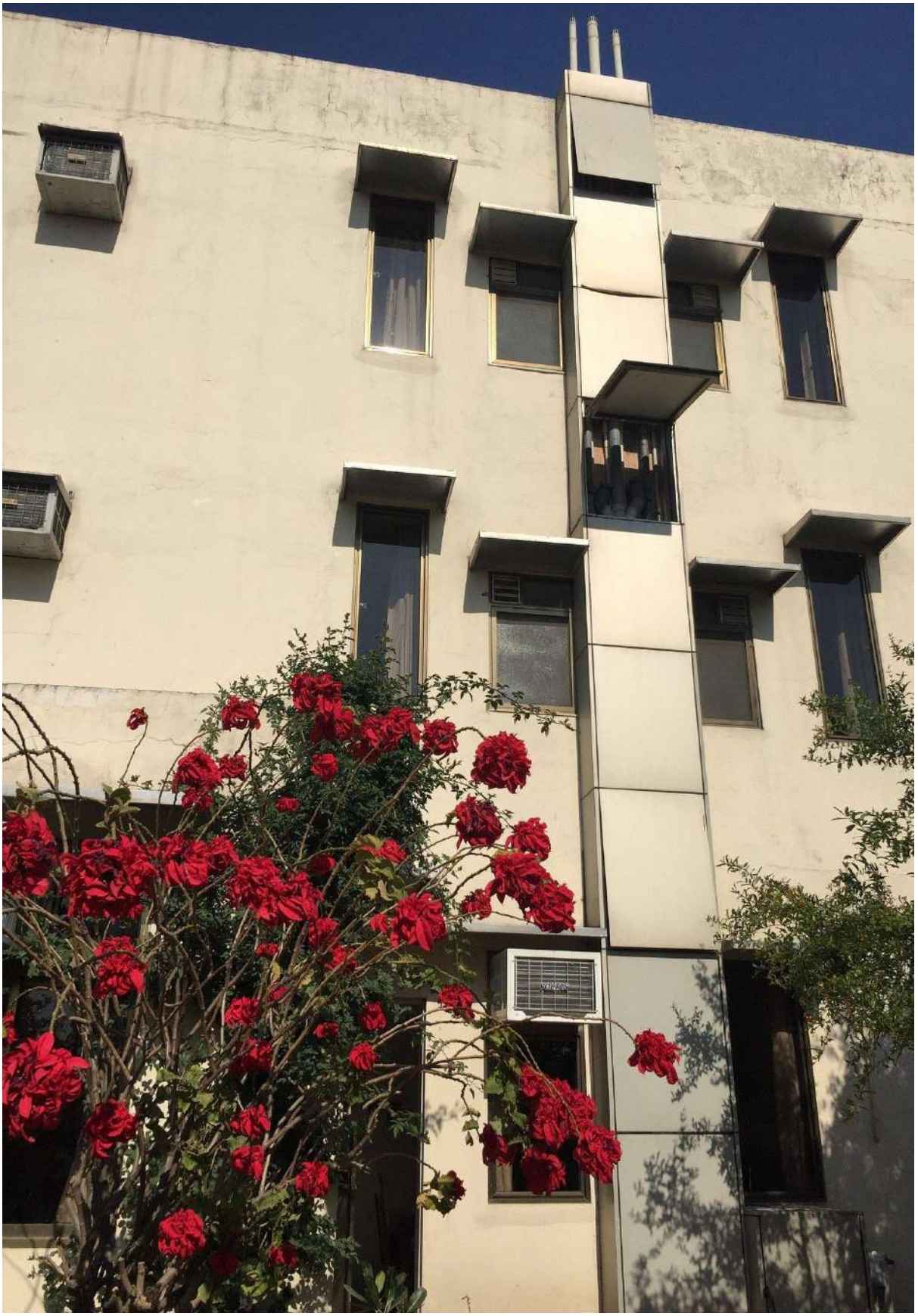
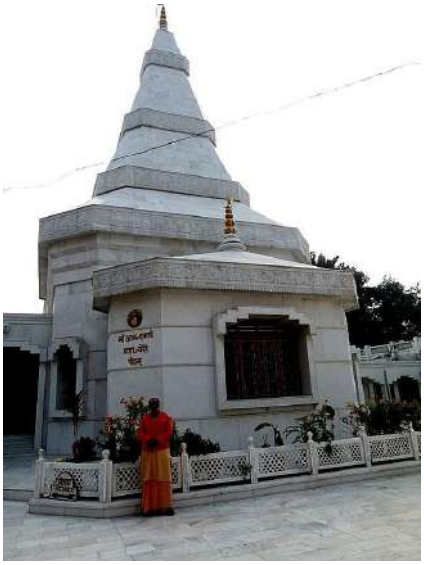
At last found the place I was looking for.

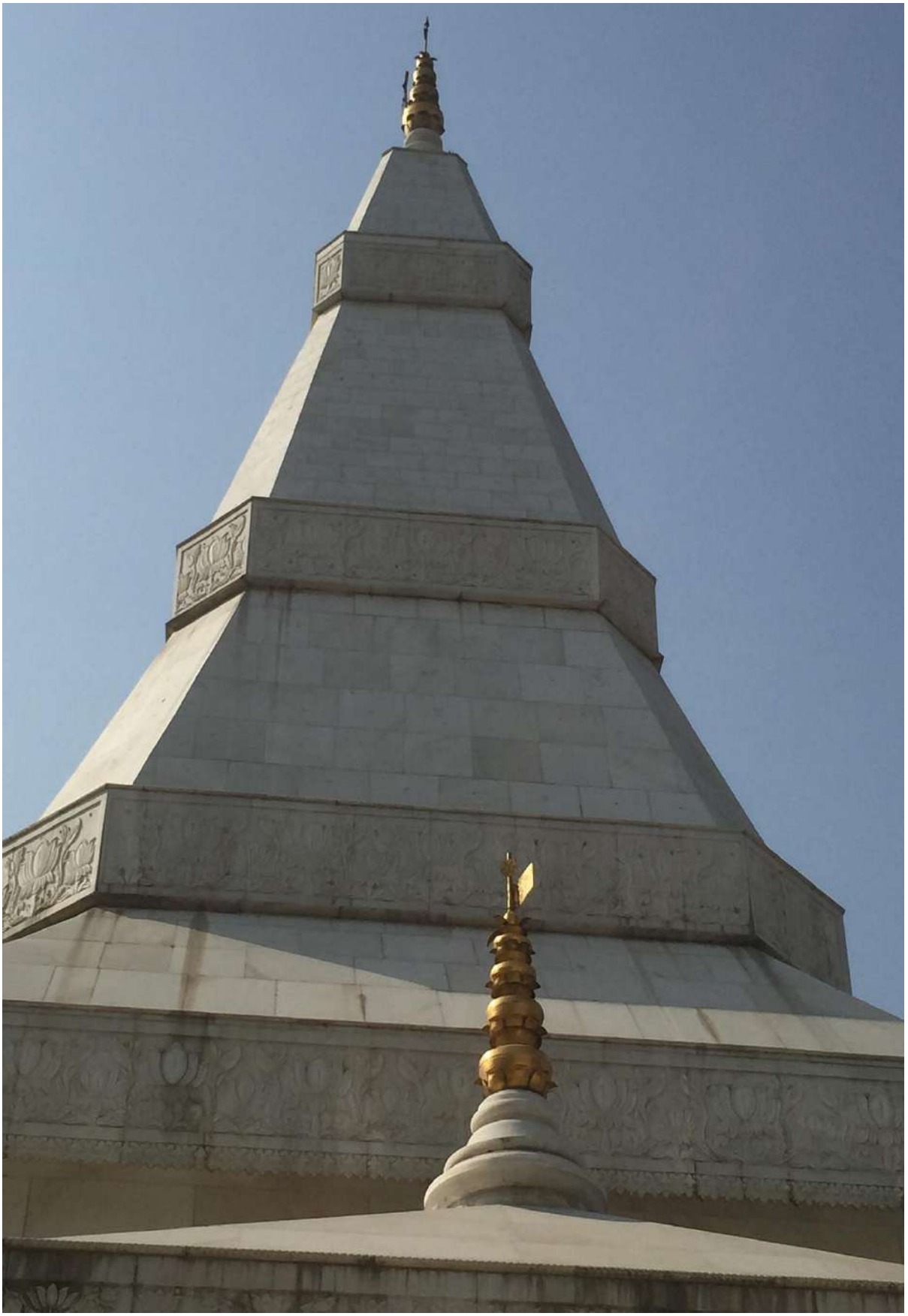
Oct 2019

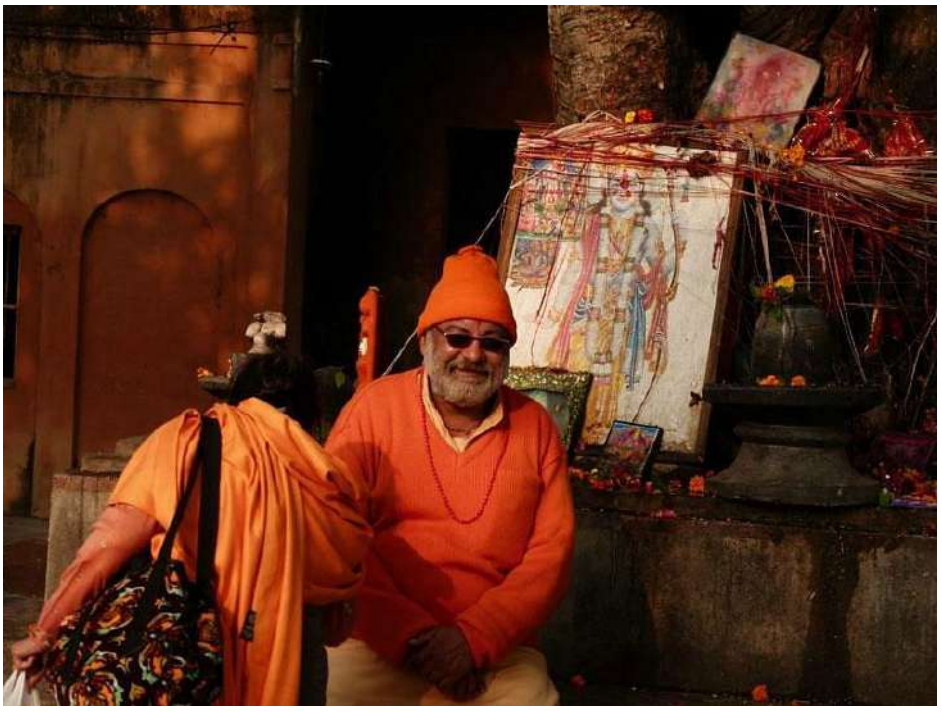
Travelling to this place from Haridwar is very easy. You take a auto rikshaw. Pay 30/- bucks and the driver will drop you to the Ashram in 15/20 minutes.

The Ashram is like any other quiet places of worship. But the Samadhi Mandir makes a whole lot of difference for people like me who fortunately had the privilege of meeting her in person. It is like home coming. Actually this is not the original Ashram where I met Maa Anandamoyee in the year 1971. This Ashram was built later on a much bigger space. The original Ashram, though small, is still there, nearby, but is now known as "Didima's Samadhi Mandir". Didima was mother of Maa Anandamoyee. I was looking for the old Ashram and found it. Old memories came alive and I was in tears.









FaceBook page: Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee-Matri Satsang

Photos-about various activities in Kankhal Ashram, Haridwar:

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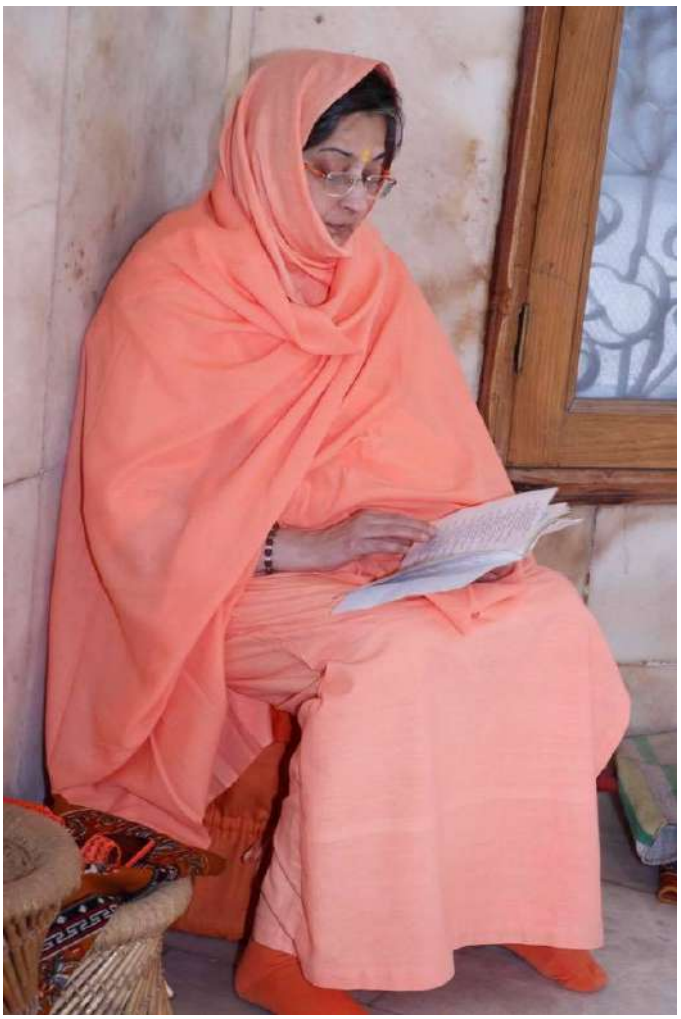

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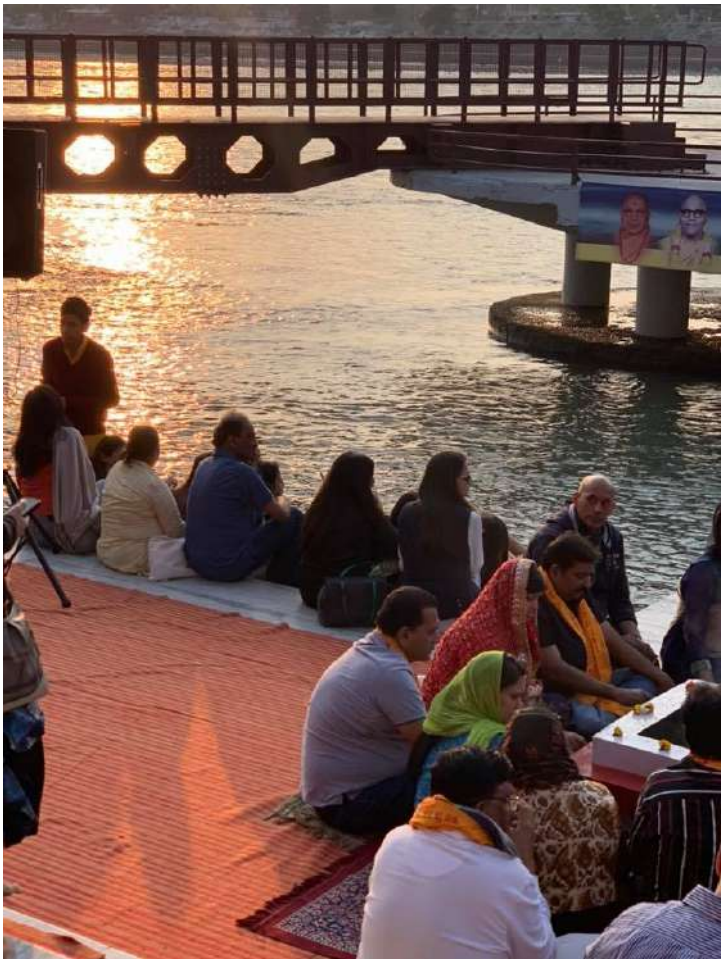

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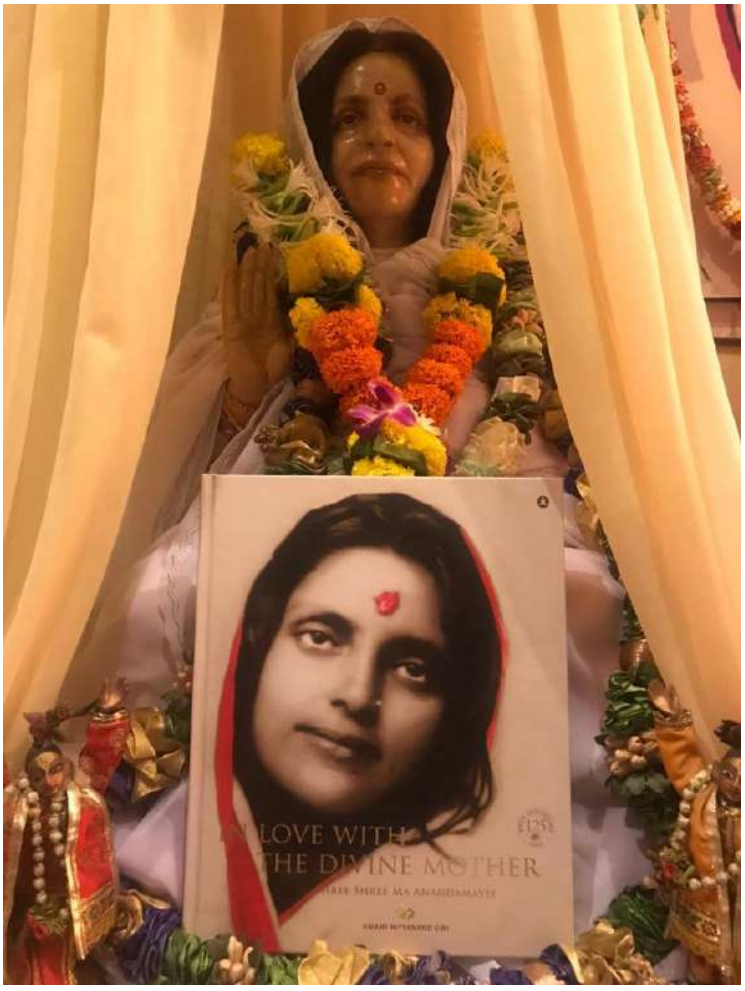
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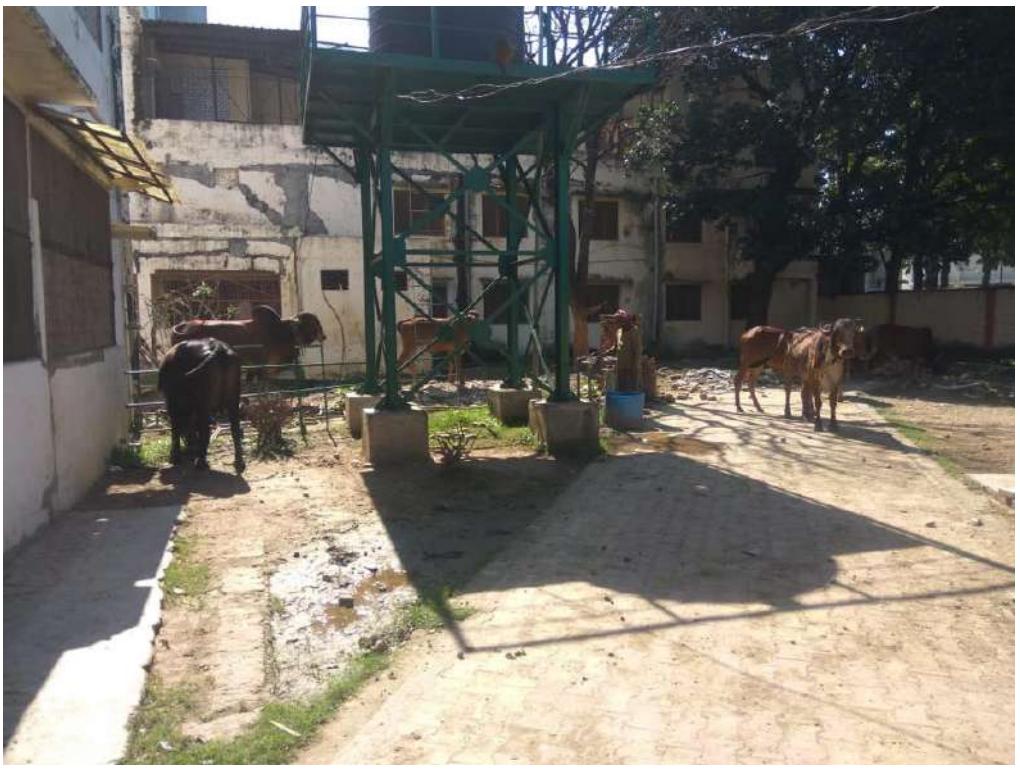

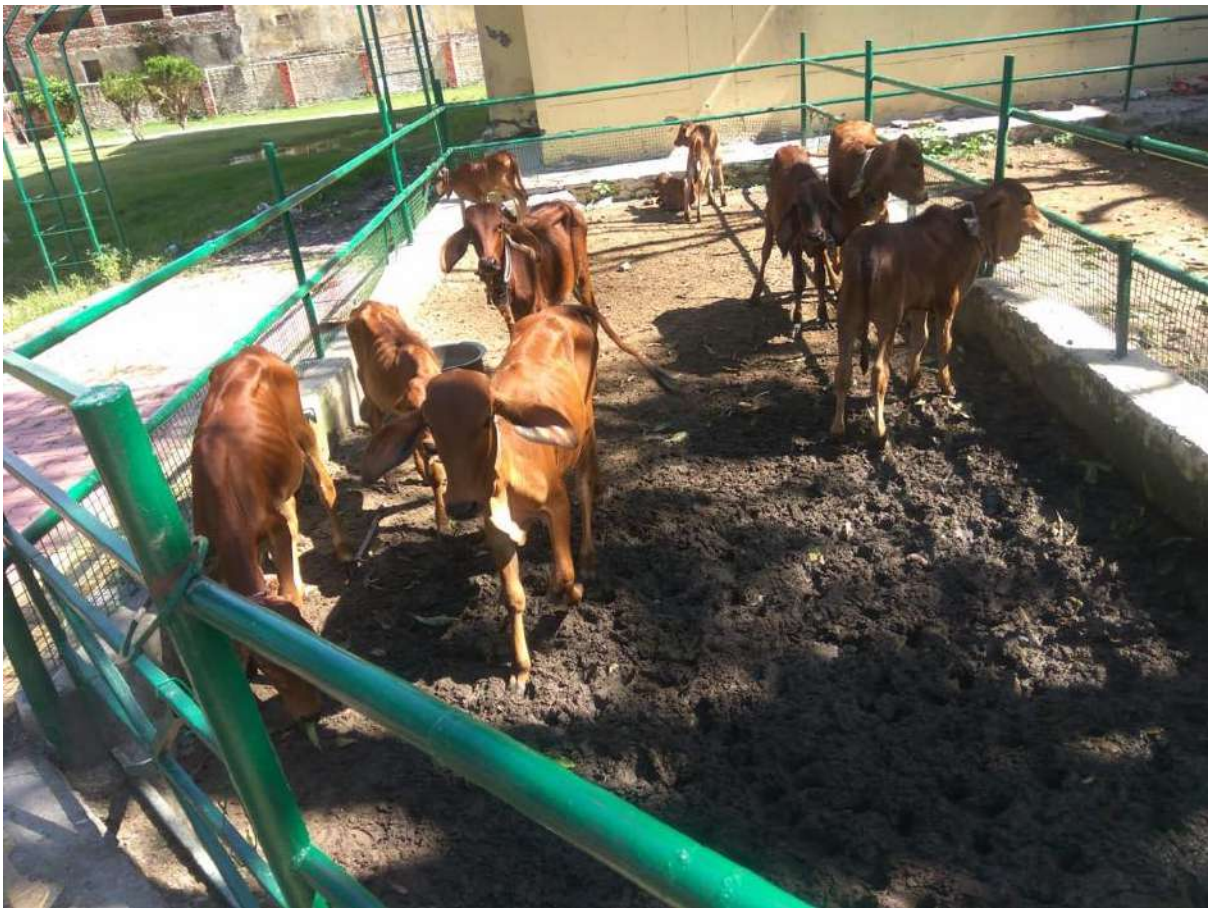

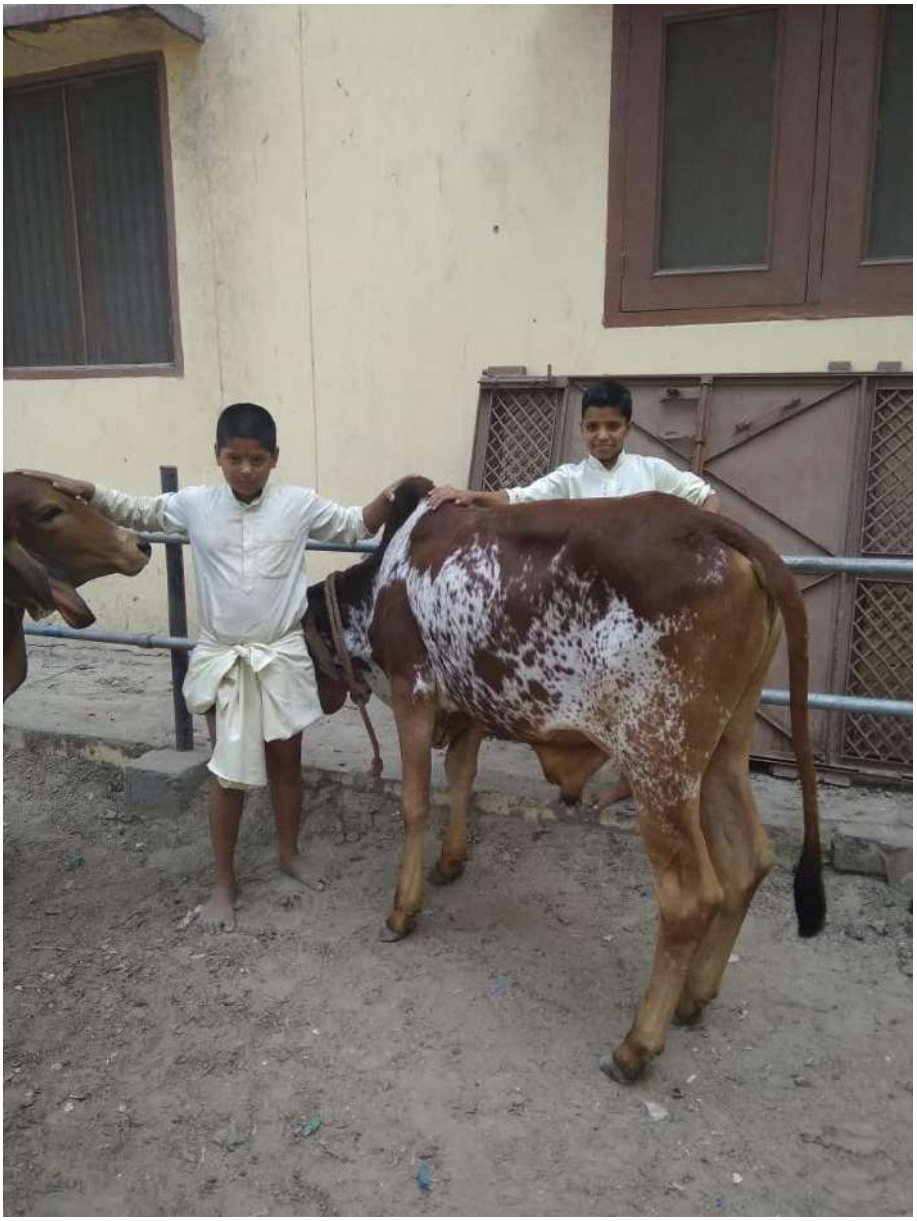

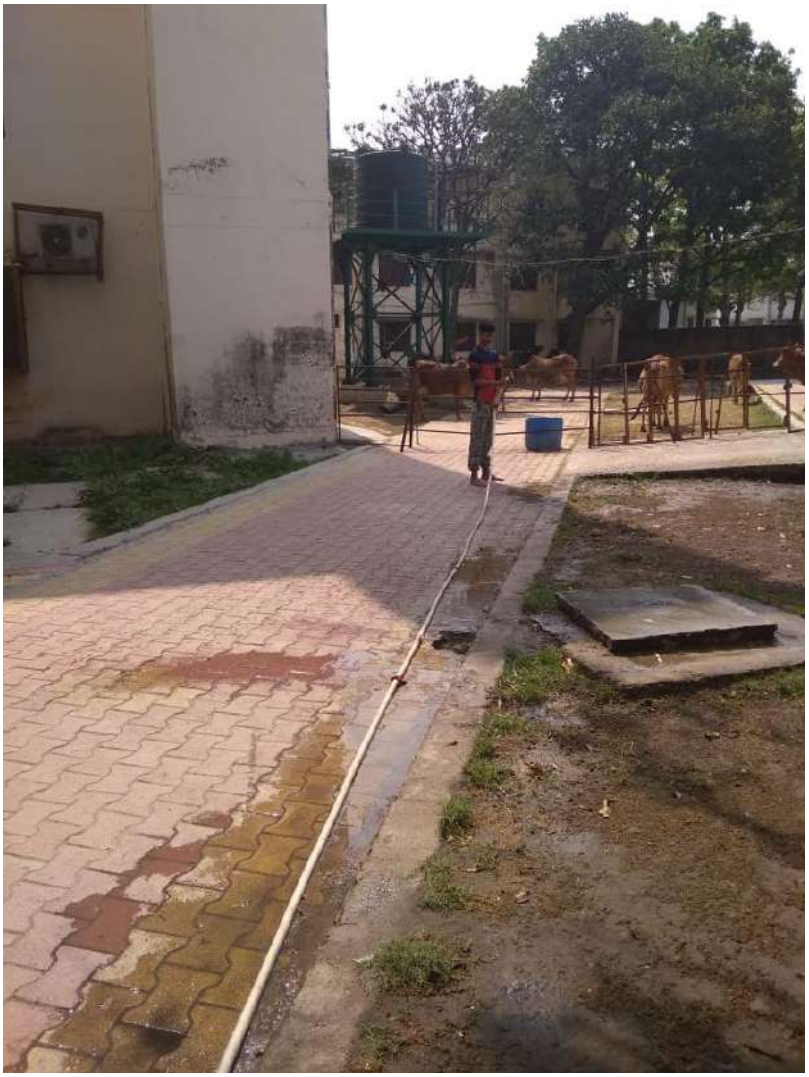

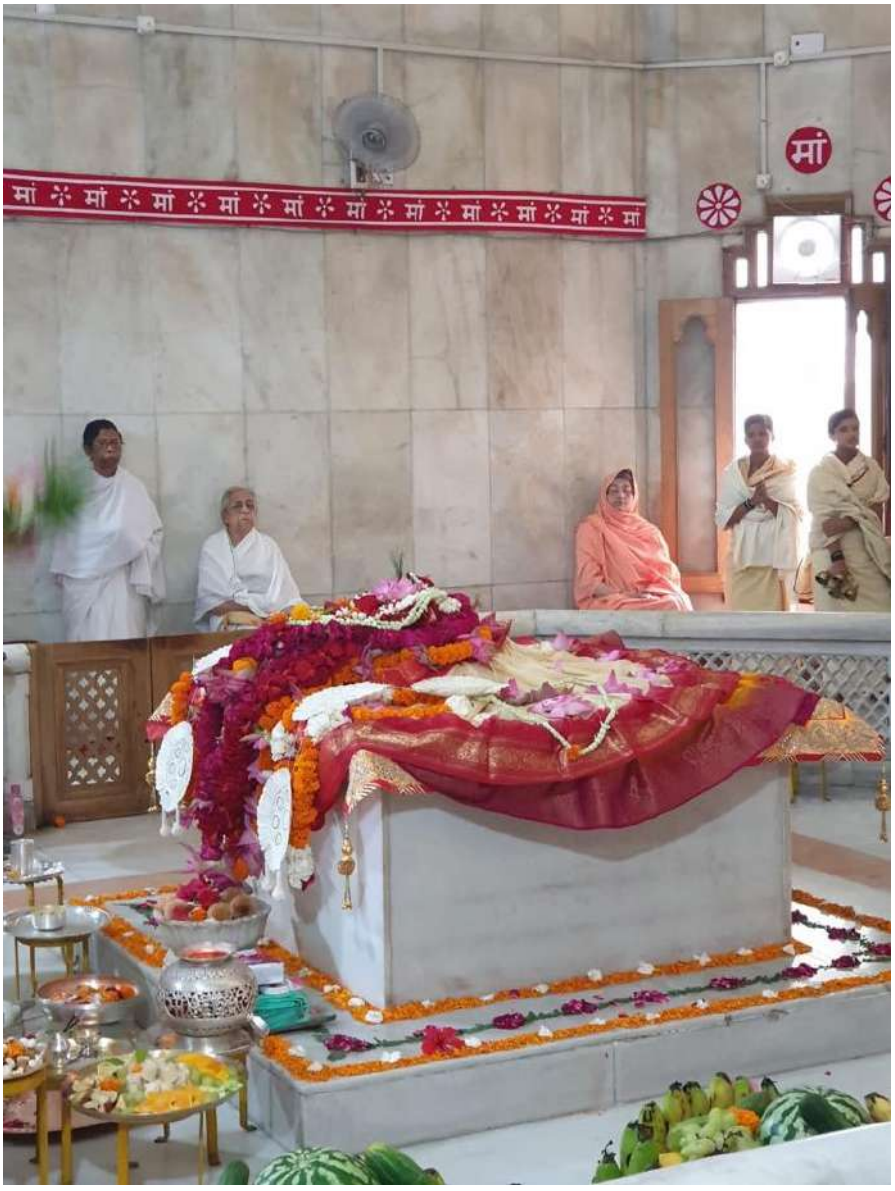
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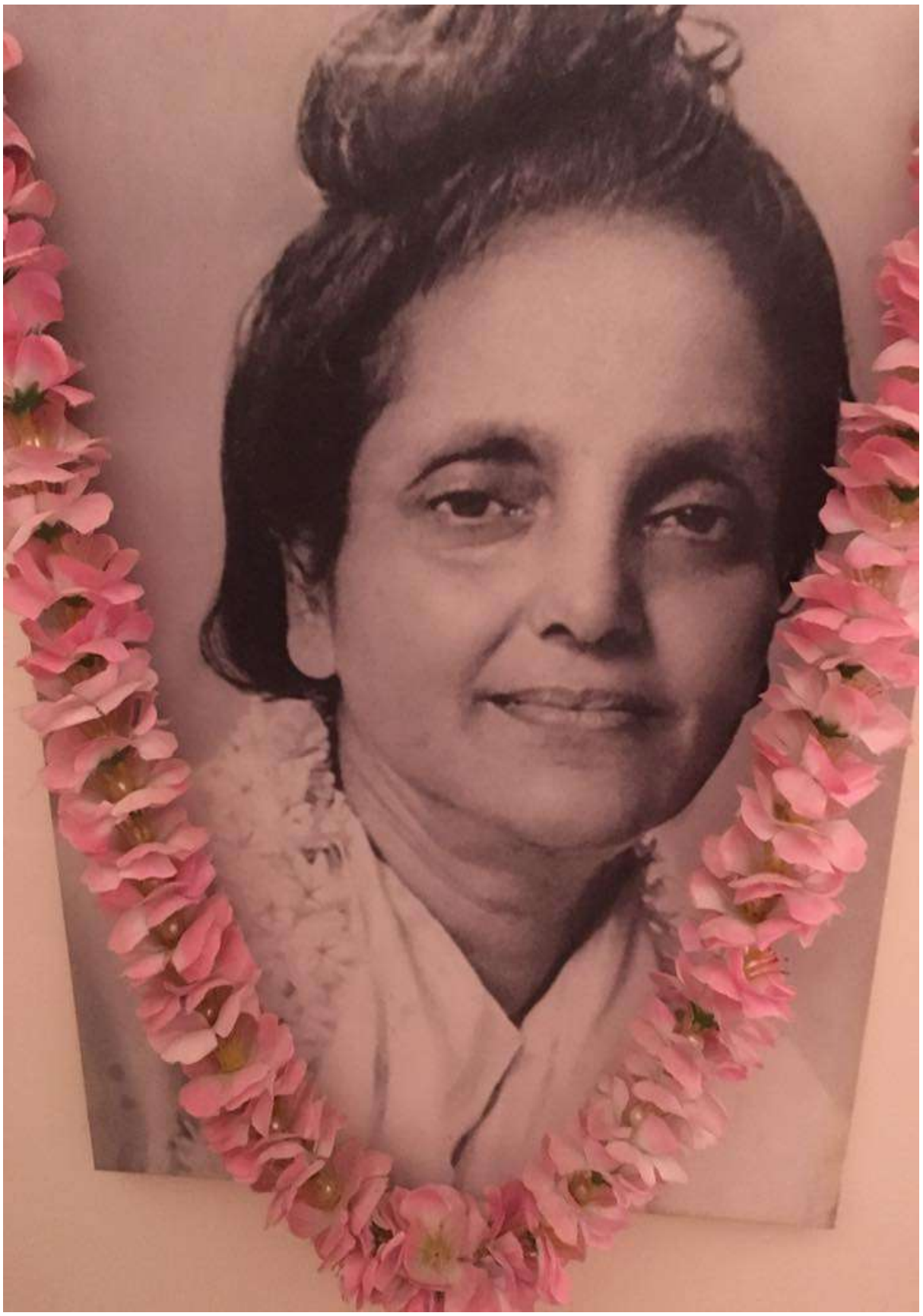

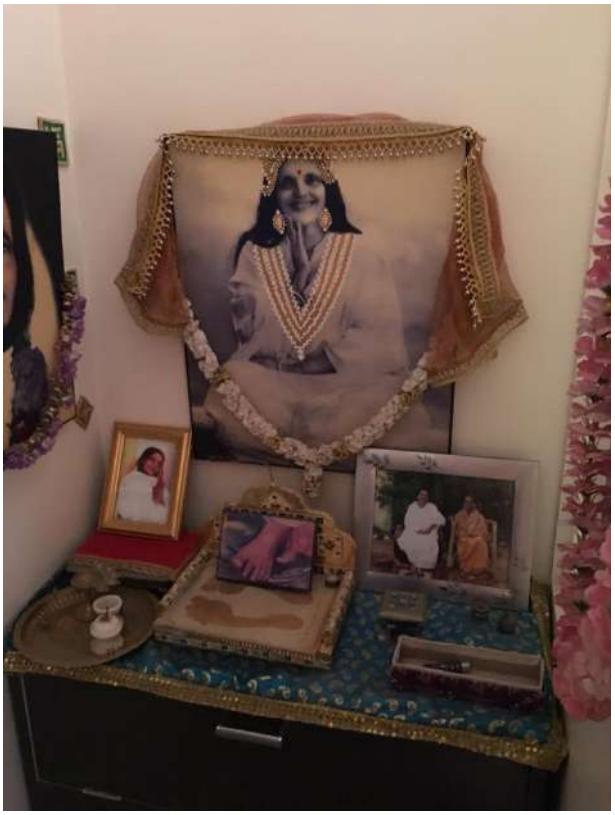

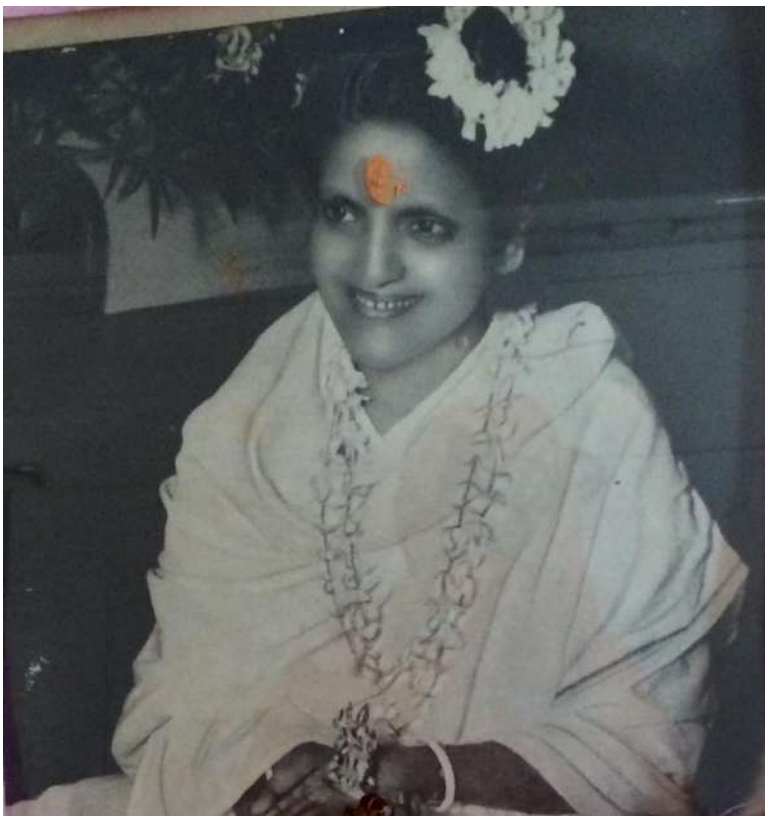

FB Videos-about activities in Kankhal Ashram, Navratri, Aarti at Samadhi, Gowshala, Kumari Pooja, Ganga Aarti etc:

Most popular:https://fb.watch/djDLgMoJse/

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Aarti at Paramarth Niketan:
https://www.facebook.com/shreemaanandamayee/videos/1055190581529499/

Aarti: https://www.facebook.com/shreemaanandamayee/videos/491837241767049/

Happy Navratri:
https://www.facebook.com/shreemaanandamayee/videos/486711835508715/

Jai Ma: https://www.facebook.com/shreemaanandamayee/videos/2424204574531130/

Jai Ma: https://www.facebook.com/shreemaanandamayee/videos/453609275429275/

Aarti in Ma's Samadhi, Kankhal:
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Kumari Pooja, Kankhal:
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Jai Ma: https://www.facebook.com/shreemaanandamayee/videos/667339543711118/

Jai Ma: https://www.facebook.com/shreemaanandamayee/videos/564082767447765/

Jai Ma: https://www.facebook.com/shreemaanandamayee/videos/855915051450388/

Jai Ma: https://www.facebook.com/shreemaanandamayee/videos/281351909485572/

Mumbai Prempuri Ashram: Pujya Rameshbhai Ozha doing Aarti:
https://www.facebook.com/shreemaanandamayee/videos/456719058408210/

Jai Ma: https://www.facebook.com/shreemaanandamayee/videos/2211371172458729/

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Jai Ma: https://www.facebook.com/shreemaanandamayee/videos/2424982757732026/

Boys of Vidyapeeth doing seva in Kankhal Aashram:
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Sanskars: https://www.facebook.com/shreemaanandamayee/videos/2258365297553685/

Happy Holi:
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Gangaji Aarti:
https://www.facebook.com/shreemaanandamayee/videos/394156921362841/

Jai Ma: https://www.facebook.com/shreemaanandamayee/videos/830943830571791/

Jai Ma: https://www.facebook.com/shreemaanandamayee/videos/572019459928404/

Jai Ma: Padma, the mother and one day old Preeti in Kankhal Aashram:
https://www.facebook.com/shreemaanandamayee/videos/2081070145275722/

Gowshala in Kankhal:
https://www.facebook.com/shreemaanandamayee/videos/455099178356839/

Kumari Pooja in Kankhal:
https://www.facebook.com/shreemaanandamayee/videos/1693549547429621/

Sat Chandi on Ma's birth anniversary:
https://www.facebook.com/shreemaanandamayee/videos/1693547680763141/

Satsang Video:
https://www.facebook.com/shreemaanandamayee/videos/1226435510807696/

Most amazing thing:
https://www.facebook.com/shreemaanandamayee/videos/1206572066127374/

Sung in Ma's Samadhi,Kankhal:
https://www.facebook.com/shreemaanandamayee/videos/1087699684681280/

YouTubeVideos:

Documentary about Ma's life, talks, bhajans in her voice, talks with English subtitles, Questions answered answers, visit of Mrs. Indira Gandhi, compilation of cinema film clips, Pooja at Ma's samadhi etc

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Ma and Me - Anandamayi Ma documentary (1 hr 34 min): https://youtu.be/ALmrh3mjBy8

Anandamayi Ma talks(1961)- with English subtitles: https://youtu.be/ltXaLlAkoDQ

Anandamayi 3-Films of joy: https://youtu.be/yfs9gXBS8TE

Anandamayi Ma: Hari, Hari…with Her real voice: https://youtu.be/bpQ6NKiby-o

Anandamayi Ma singing (1958): https://youtu.be/Q5033Xzver8

Anandamayi Ma talks - English subtitles (1960): https://youtu.be/XH_T8ivG2lk

Questions, and answers by Anandamayi at Nadiad, 1978: https://youtu.be/Mw-8LAb2c9g

Anandamayi talks in Vrindaban, 1969 and 1975: https://youtu.be/MhbnwRVEeYI

Sri Anandamayi Ma: https://youtu.be/gVF9OteqC3s

Introducing Anandamayi Ma: https://youtu.be/CNJRCOMJI8c

Questions and answers with Anandamayi Ma: https://youtu.be/vkAJXhi37Sw

Anandamayi Ma-selected teachings and pointers for meditation: https://youtu.be/xAwu8zAirBI

Sri Anandamayi Ma-moksha mantra: https://youtu.be/xbkfxmdPg5o

Jaya Ma — Anandamayi Ma: https://youtu.be/vz9lJurJnR4

Mrs Gandhi visits Anandamayi Ma, with her daughter-in-law (1981): https://youtu.be/KQunL7yBTp4

Guru Ganesh Singh: Anandamayi Ma: https://youtu.be/KIRBZr8SK8g

Sri Anandamayi Ma, in 1981, talks in private to Lokamal Chellaram and his wife: https://youtu.be/pZU0-wA70Go

Bhajan by Swami Bhajanananda: https://youtu.be/9t5ZPanHs24

Compilation of cinema film clips of Anandamayi Ma from 1956 to 1981 (1 hr 15 min): https://youtu.be/X6o5eveSC3E

Ananda kirtan- Anandamayi Ma: https://youtu.be/jM9rvfbQiws

Anandamayi Ma devotion: https://youtu.be/y6GVnTuaaJ0

Anandamayi Ma-Darshan and blessings: https://youtu.be/RIKVuikn1x8

Snehaveenabhen Shah speaks about her experiences with Anandamayi Ma (57 min): https://youtu.be/5mY-3-_PTx0

Anandamayi Ma-beautiful hymn: https://youtu.be/-_DkWe2CXzQ

Rare facts of Anandamayi Ma- by Swami Devdas Ji: https://youtu.be/2V7lt_SwrcU

How to feel free, happy and peaceful: https://youtu.be/5R5gwVfKwEU

Questions and answers with Anandamayi Ma: https://youtu.be/VAi8Mj2hco0

Evening Pooja at Anandamayi Ma 's samadhi: https://youtu.be/I7M9-z3CirU

ॐ स॒ह ना॑ ववतु । स॒ह नौ॑ भुनक्तु । स॒ह वी॒र्यं॑ करवावहै । ते॒ज॒स्विना॒वधी॑तमस्तु मा वि॑द्विषा॒वहै ॥ **(3)**
ॐ शान्ति॒: शान्ति॒: शान्ति॑: ॥ **(3)**